

Cycling

Thursday July 16, 2015

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WEEKLY



Tour de France

Cavendish

finally comes good

- Froome's perfect week
- Dowsett struggles on
- Africa's first KOM

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Hinault**
guest
column

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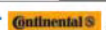
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A blistering and bruising opening week

As opening weeks go, that was pretty damn good. For those of us spectating at least. For those riding it was one of the toughest opening weeks in years. Alex Dowsett, riding his first Tour de France, told us he was exhausted just a few days in. At the other end of the spectrum was Chris Froome who always seemed to be in the right place at the right time.

Mark Cavendish's week, however, was a mixed bag. Twice being beaten by André Greipel will not have gone down well and I wouldn't have wanted to be on the Etixx bus after those stages. Like any great sportsperson, the true measure is how they come back from defeat. Cav showed us what he's made of when he burst through that tiny gap at the end of stage seven to take his 26th Tour stage. He now sits third in the stage winners list behind Eddy Merckx and Bernard Hinault. Incredible.

It's a good job too, as opportunities are running out for the Manxman. Paris is a nailed-on sprint stage while stages 13 and 15 are only outside possibilities. Has he done enough to secure the big money contract from Etixx that he wants? Either way, next time you're enjoying the race on TV, spare a thought for the riders and the massive pressure

they're under when fighting their way to the finish line.

Simon Richardson,
acting editor



Photos: Press Association

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BMC steal the limelight
in a riveting TTT

Tour de France

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Cav finally gets his Tour stage

Brit sprinter ends two-year drought

Hugh Gladstone in Fougères

Mark Cavendish lifted a large load from his shoulders when he won the seventh stage of the Tour de France in Fougères last Friday.

Having last won a stage in 2013 and twice losing out to Lotto-Soudal's André Greipel during the opening week of this year's race, the Etixx-Quick Step rider finally nailed it at the end of a 190.5km leg from Livarot to claim the 26th

Tour stage win of his career.

Whereas in this year's two previous sprint showdowns at Zeeland and Amiens he opened the sprint, the Manxman played a waiting game in the third gallop, accelerating in the wheels of Katusha's Alexander Kristoff then Greipel before powering through for the victory.

"I just wanted to wait today, not hit out early," Cavendish said. "You can see when I wait, I've got the speed."

The 30-year-old admitted he had almost waited too long. Had he not left himself enough time to come around his rivals before the line, that wait for a stage win would have been extended by at least another week and no doubt compounded his frustration.

"When he's not winning the sprints, he gets more and more angry," noted Etixx sports director Brian Holm of Cavendish.

"No one likes getting beaten, and he probably likes it the least

MY VIEW...

Hugh Gladstone

CW news editor

After two disappointing results at this year's Tour, Mark Cavendish didn't simply try again but looked at what he could do differently. As much as his inherent speed, it's testament to his ability to self-assess and adapt to his rivals that Cavendish is now the Tour's third most prolific stage winner ever.



out of anyone," added his lead-out man Mark Renshaw.

Keeping the faith

Despite the two defeats, as well as an aborted lead-out in Le Havre, his team kept their faith in him on the road to Fougères. Although it was Kristoff's Katusha that led out the gallop, Etixx — already with two other stage wins and a spell in the yellow jersey under their belt — carefully delivered Cavendish to the position he wanted.

"The lads could've given up on me," said the Manxman. "But they kept the faith."

The last time Cavendish won in the Tour was two years ago after his team split the bunch on the windblown stage to Saint-Amand-Montrond. Last year he crashed out of the Tour sprinting for the finish of the opening stage in Harrogate. With his current contract at Etixx coming to an end this year, Friday's win was a timely reminder that Cavendish is still one of the fastest men on two wheels.

Joy and pain for departing Martin

Richard Abraham

Tony Martin must be used to putting a brave face on things. He's had to do that a lot during this Tour de France. After finally getting to pull on the yellow jersey for the first time in his career last week, the German had to abandon the race while in the overall lead when he broke his collarbone in a spill in Le Havre two days later.

The tumble happened inside the final kilometre of stage six and while his team-mate Zdenek Stybar was up the road winning, Martin was pushed to the line by a trio of Etixx-Quick Step riders as he cradled his left arm.

"This has been like a movie, an emotional roller-coaster at this Tour," said Martin, who became the 15th rider in history to abandon the Tour while in the yellow jersey. "It's so strange to be so sad and so happy at the same time."

Nearly man no more

Martin both enjoyed and suffered a remarkable six days on the Tour. On stage four he claimed the stage and yellow jersey by attacking solo with 3.2km to go. Even that wasn't straightforward; he'd swapped to team-mate Matteo Trentin's bike following a puncture on the cobbles and the brakes were set up the other way around, almost sending him into the barriers on the technical approach to the finish.

The yellow came after he finished a close second to BMC's Rohan Dennis in the opening time trial and sat second overall after stage two, thanks to the efforts of his erstwhile time trial nemesis Fabian Cancellara (Trek) in beating Mark Cavendish (Etixx-Quick Step) to third on the stage. The following day he ended up second overall again, this time to Chris Froome. Had the Sky rider finished 0.07 seconds slower on the Mur de Huy finish he would have been given a time one second slower than stage winner Joaquim Rodríguez (Katusha) and Martin would have claimed yellow.

The former world time trial champion was flown to Germany to undergo surgery on his collarbone the day after the crash when doctors refused him permission to start the seventh stage.

"I really wish I could continue, to even just start tomorrow, even if it's broken," he added after the stage. "I wish I could honour the jersey and show it one last time with a ceremony at the start. I could enjoy it a little more than I have the last days and then stop."



Froome in control after perfect first week

Rivals playing catch-up as Sky leader powers on



Steely Thomas shows his Grand Tour mettle

Sophie Hurcom

Geraint Thomas proved to be an invaluable right-hand man to Chris Froome in the hectic and eventful first nine days of the Tour de France, protecting his team leader while also heading to the Pyrenees in eighth place overall himself.

"After riding the Classics knowing not just the roads but positioning and fighting, I knew I'd play that role but I've really enjoyed it, it couldn't have gone better," Thomas said ahead of the race's first rest day.

The 29-year-old, riding in his fifth Tour, has become one of the most vital members of Team Sky in recent times. With overall victory at the Tour of the Algarve, a win at E3 Harelbeke and second at the Tour de Suisse just before the Tour began, this year has been the Welshman's most successful on the road so far.

"I knew I was going well coming here after riding the Tour de Suisse," he said. "Each year since I've left the track it feels like I've been getting stronger and losing that puppy fat and track fat, and keeping progressing."

"It would be nice to have one really good day in the mountains and keep moving on as I have in the last few years."

Sky team principal Sir Dave Brailsford said this week that he sees Thomas leading the squad in Grand Tours in future. However, for the time being, Thomas is focused on helping Froome rather than his own personal ambition. "For sure I'd love to [win], I'd love to take that chance but it's more a fact of being further in the line and getting Froomey closer to the finish, being there at the death on the climbs," he said.

And what about leading his own team one day? "It's something you dream of as a kid. I'd love to do it one day — I've done it a few times now in weeklong races. I'll just keep doing that hopefully and try to win one of them. Then Grand Tours, we'll take that a bit further down the line."

Cobbles, wind, nerves, rain, crashes, heat, tricky finishing climbs and a team time trial that came unusually late in the race were all thrown at the Tour de France during its opening nine days. But going into the first rest day on Monday, Chris Froome acknowledged things couldn't have gone much better for him.

After Sunday's team time trial, the Sky leader had already enjoyed three days in the yellow jersey and, going into the Pyrenees, commanded a lead of 12 seconds over second-placed Tejay van Garderen (BMC) with other key rivals Alberto Contador (Tinkoff-Saxo), Nairo Quintana (Movistar) and Vincenzo Nibali (Astana) all over one minute back.

"I really think that this first phase of the race has gone better than any of us could have imagined," said Froome.

"It's one thing not to lose time to any of your rivals, but to actually gain quite substantial amounts of time on quite a lot of the contenders has really put us in a fantastic position."

While Froome had already made gains — temporal and psychological — on stages two and three, he consolidated them with a strong showing in Saturday's stage to Mûr de Bretagne where Nibali faltered, then again in Sunday's team time trial where his Sky team finished second just one second behind Van Garderen's BMC.

While Sky team principal

Sir Dave Brailsford felt that everything had "just seemed to flow", Froome's advantageous position was also the result of his and his team's incisive riding on stages not necessarily to his suiting.

The 2013 Tour winner was remarkably aggressive on Tuesday's cobbled stage, survived some nervous midweek sprint stages across northern France and even came out of a tiff with defending champion Nibali after a crash in Le Havre riding the moral high ground.

As the race headed for more physical heights in the Pyrenees this week, Brailsford said he was relieved that the challenges of the first week were now behind them while Froome took confidence from the margins he already commanded.

"It's for the other guys to try to take the jersey from me now and potentially for us to ride a more defensive race," said Froome.

Of Froome's rivals, van Garderen and Contador both enjoyed a solid week and appeared to pose the most immediate threat to him.

"We've definitely passed the first phase of the Tour very well," said the USA's van Garderen. "The way I was climbing and feeling at the Dauphiné compared to Froome, I think I'm pretty close."

"We're really not going to know [if I can challenge him for the win] until we get to the third week and see who has the depth to hold it."

MY VIEW...

Sophie Hurcom

Cycling Weekly news writer

With every decisive move that's happened in the Tour's first nine days, Geraint Thomas was right by Chris Froome's side. Still well-placed overall, it begs the question as to what he could do if he was riding for himself.



Paolini tests positive for cocaine

Katusha's Luca Paolini was ejected from the Tour de France and provisionally suspended after testing positive for cocaine in an anti-doping test at the race. The 38-year-old returned the sample on stage four and was withdrawn by his team last Friday night. Cocaine is on WADA's list of banned substances and a positive test during competition will trigger a suspension.

Porcine protest

Processed pig specialist Cochonou is a staple in the Tour de France publicity caravan but disaster struck for fans of greasy bangers on stage eight when the distinctive red gingham 2CVs were removed from the race. Why? Local farmers were threatening to target the race in protest over low pork prices.

Porte to leave Sky

Richie Porte confirmed cycling's worst-kept secret on Sunday: that he will leave Team Sky at the end of 2014. "I've got to take my own opportunities," he said. "I'm ready, I'm in the prime of my career now for the next few years, so I need to go and lead a team." BMC is widely rumoured to be his destination.

MTN man makes African history

Eritrea's Daniel Teklehaimanot made history last week by becoming the first African rider to pull on the polka-dot jersey of the King of the Mountains. The MTN-Qhubeka rider, 26, swept up the KoM points in breakaways on stages six and seven and was supported across France by a vocal expat Eritrean contingent.



Teklehaimanot: Africa's first King of the Mountains

Photo: Yuzuru Sunada

Guest column

Bernard Hinault



"When I raced, it used to kick off three cols before the finish. There were no teams controlling things — it was man against man"

I find it a real shame that we no longer have great champions in cycling. We have champion riders, but ones that wait until the final kilometre to start racing. In the past, when I was racing, it used to all kick off three cols before the finish. There were no teams controlling things; it was a war, man against man.

It's been 30 years since my last Tour victory. When you look back, 30 years is an enormous length of time. But when you've been a professional cyclist, it feels like it was yesterday.

There are some great memories from that 1985 Tour. I remember the prologue; everyone thought that Eric Vanderaerden would win easily but I was riding in Brittany, in my own back garden. I hadn't won since 1982 so I also had to show that 'the Badger' wasn't dead. I tapped out a huge pace in the first week and the peloton realised: "Oh yes, there he is."

Crunching the numbers

I would like to have raced this year's Tour, and if I were still riding I know what I would do to win. On the cobbles, on a day with the crosswinds by the coast, I would try by every possible method to eliminate the others. It's a bit old-fashioned but as a Tour rider you had to be able to use everything available to you. I don't think there is a rider like that today. A *patron* is someone who stamps his authority right from the word go. Today the riders always ride together, on each other's left and right.

I'm not proud to be the last French winner of the Tour. It's not about me; it's about the French public. If a Frenchman won this year I would congratulate them along with everybody else. And I hope it happens before I'm dead!

But they will only win the Tour if they attack from a long way out. If the big contenders are in their wheels then they will end up fifth and sixth, but if they attack from a long way out they can perhaps benefit from the rivalry between the big four; the first one of them that chases risks losing out on the others. The French riders have to play off that, even if they lose everything and end up 20th or 30th, or out of time. They have to try something.

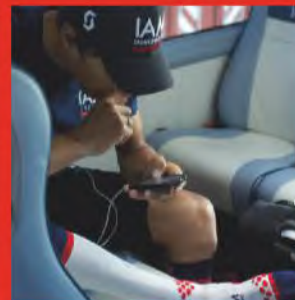
Bernard Hinault won five Tours de France and built a fearsome reputation. He now works in public relations for Tour organisers ASO.



Alberto Contador.
Giro d'Italia 2015 Champion



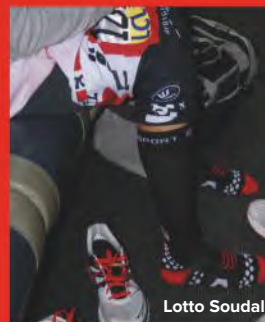
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Van Garderen's BMC time trial bike

SADDLE

The standard Fizik Arione is a popular choice for pros. Less common is the version van Garderen uses, which features a relief channel.



SEATSTAYS

The dropped seatstays of the BMC Timemachine were unusual when first unveiled. They are now a common feature on aero bikes.



BMC's Timemachine has stood the test of time at the Tour de France

At four years old, the BMC Timemachine is getting on in pro bike terms. First seen back in the 2011 Tour, Cadel Evans had just 42.5km to make up 58 seconds on Andy Schleck to take yellow. He

did it aboard a TM01. Despite being older than many other professional TT bikes, the Timemachine shows no signs of slowing down after Rohan Dennis set the record for the fastest time trial in Tour de France history aboard one.

Van Garderen's bike features Shimano Pro wheels, with a Pro disc on the rear and a choice of depths for the front depending on the weather and parcoures.

Perhaps the most striking thing about van Garderen's

bike is his unusual layback TT seatpost. Clearly a rider who prefers to sit further back over the rear wheel, the bike features a 30mm layback. This is in contrast to many time triallists, particularly those with a pursuit



EXTRA SHIFTERS

To allow van Garderen to change gear when not on the tri-bars, his bike features additional shifters.

AERO ROUTING

The cockpit is integrated, with cables routed through the stem to reduce drag.



background, who often prefer to sit over the bottom bracket.

For ease of access, the Di2 junction box has been attached to the side of the stem and integrated headset with Velcro.

The bike is kitted out with Shimano Dura-Ace Di2 11-speed and features gear

shifters on both the tri-bars and outer bars. Tyres are Continental Competition Pro 23mm, and van Garderen's saddle of choice is the Fizik Arione VSX that features a relief channel for reduced perineal pressure.

Other features worthy of mention are the integrated

seatpost bolt and the neat cable routing through the headset.

Earlier in the year van Garderen told *CW*: "The Tour de France winner should be the most complete rider, but Christian Prudhomme is missing one key element to make it an event for a

truly complete rider." Van Garderen was referring to the absence of a long individual time trial, a discipline he is strong in, which would have seen him riding his race-proven BMC Timemachine TM01. Will the lack of a long ITT cost van Garderen a podium in Paris?

Weekly column Rob Hayles



“Cycling can be a dangerous sport, but getting it out to the wider audience, that’s a risky business on a whole different level”

What an opening week we’ve had at this year’s Tour de France. The weather gave everyone something to talk about. There has been intense heat, big winds, and some torrential rain that threatened to put me in the commentary hot seat as my BBC lead partner in crime Simon Brotherton refused to get out of the car on stage two. It took some persuading, but we eventually got him to unlock the door by waving a bag of Haribo at the window.

Simon is now on his 20th Tour, but there are still sights that take him by surprise. At a great sporting event like this there are more than enough stories to fill a whole shelf of books. The kilometre after kilometre of cables running everywhere in the technical zone beside the finish line would send a ‘no win no fee’ solicitor into a frenzy. How there aren’t as many accidents behind the camera as in front of it I will never know. The other day I saw a satellite dish on a tripod unattended. Apparently if you walk in front of one of them, it’s all over... for you too, as well as the programme. And the blocks of wood wedged under the finish line gantry to keep it straight look just like a game of oversized Jenga waiting to come crashing down.

Excitable Spaniards

Talking of crashing, it’s not just the riders who’ve been at it. Myself and Simon are situated upstairs in the commentary boxes next to the Spanish radio team. When these guys see something to get excited about, all hell breaks loose. When Alberto Contador and his squad were putting everyone to the sword in a crosswind, our man next to us started going loco. So much so that as he was shouting into his mic, he slipped off the front of his chair, banged his chin on the table, and landed in a heap on the floor. All this, while continuing his commentary without a pause. His listeners would have been none the wiser.

So while the riders gallantly continue with their Tour through illness and injury, please take a moment to think of us poor souls behind the scenes. Cycling can be a dangerous sport. But getting it out to the wider audience, that’s a risky business on a whole different level.

Former double world track champion, Rob Hayles is a pundit for TV and radio. He’s also a coffee connoisseur and garden shed inventor



Dowsett has endured a baptism of fire

Dowsett on a Tour roller-coaster

Richard Abraham

Nobody says it will be easy, but British debutant Alex Dowsett has had a tougher start than most to his first ever Tour de France.

The British time trial champion fought to the first rest day following the stage nine team time trial after enduring a torrid few days when a crash on stage four left him with a deep cut to his elbow.

Over three weeks, riders in the Tour can expect to go through phases of optimism, misery, self-doubt and exhaustion. Dowsett, 26, experienced them all in just three days.

“It’s been a bit of a roller-coaster,” Dowsett said. “I was doing a good job and then on the cobbled stage I punched a hole in my arm, and my body has just been trying to recover since then.

“I’ve had some days where it felt like I was starting to come back, and then stage seven was pretty terrible.”

Dowsett’s solo chase following his crash, just before the second sector of cobbles on stage four, saw him finish nine minutes behind the previous rider up the road and 26 minutes behind stage winner Tony Martin. However, it was on stage five from Arras to Amiens that he suffered his toughest moments.

“My body just didn’t want to know; that was really tough just getting through that stage,” the Movistar rider, who suffers from haemophilia, said.

“I just had nothing from the word go. Braking was difficult and holding onto my right handlebar was difficult. I was flat-out and my average heart rate was 115bpm.”

Despite the crashes, injuries and battles on the bike, the Tour has lost none of its allure for the former time triallist from Essex. “What’s nice about being here is that back at home when you tell someone you’re a professional cyclist, they often ask, ‘Do you ride the Tour de France?’

“Before now I’ve always had to explain that I’m at that level, but I haven’t ridden it. Now it’ll be quite nice just to say, ‘Yes, I have.’”

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Explosive Opie back to winning ways

Nick Bull

Chris Opie and One Pro Cycling couldn't have timed their race-winning performance in Sunday's Stockton GP any better.

"We saw [team founder and former England cricketer] Matt Prior this morning for a catch-up," Opie told *CW* on Monday. "Talking about a victory is a nice way to start a meeting!"

Opie's explosive sprint finish gave him a comfortable gap across the line at the end of the latest round of British Cycling's Elite Road Series, and was his biggest win since illness plagued his 2014 season.

"It was great to get back to winning ways," said Opie, a two-time Tour Series round victor. "After last year, I began to doubt myself, so it was nice to be able to sit up with 50 metres to go, have a look round behind me and really enjoy that winning feeling."

His win capped off a fine performance by his team, who marshalled the peloton throughout, and also placed George Atkins in the race's notable breakaway with NFTO's Ian Bibby.

Parts of the event's course will likely feature in next year's British Road Race Championships to be held in the market town, but changes to make the route more selective are expected.

"The race is one of only a few on the British calendar that you can really plan to finish in a sprint," added Opie. "It was the first time we've been able to use such tactics in a race this year, and it worked perfectly."

"Plenty of riders always congratulate their team-mates when they win, but it's true: the team looked after me perfectly all day."

Johnny McEvoy (NFTO) placed second ahead of the Raleigh-GAC duo Sam Lowe and Evan Oliphant. Another Raleigh rider, Steve Lampier, still leads the Elite Road Series after placing eighth.

Walker's Grand Tour vindication

Servetto-Footon Brit happy she switched teams after impressive Giro performance

Nick Bull

Promising Briton Jessie Walker believes her performance in last week's Giro d'Italia Internazionale Femminile justified her decision to change teams mid-season.

Walker finished her first Grand Tour in 50th place, just over an hour behind overall winner Anna van der Breggen (Rabo-Liv) but nine places ahead of compatriot Sharon Laws (Bigla).

The 20-year-old Yorkshirewoman, daughter of former Milk Race winner Chris, joined the Italian Servetto-Footon squad in June after an unusual mid-season transfer owing to a schedule of races with former team Matrix Pro Cycling that did not suit her style.

"It emphasises the fact I made the right decision," said Walker of her Giro performance. "I found the step up to UCI-level races really tough at the start of the year; riding in Belgium and the



Walker's career move saw her straight into Grand Tour action

Netherlands didn't suit me. Racing stage races is more to my style.

"To make it through the Giro has given me so much confidence: looking back, I don't know how I did it. The length [10 stages] is more than I've ever done, the level of competition is the highest it can be, the temperatures went up to 47°C one day and the mountains are tough."

Walker only found out she would compete in the race upon signing for Servetto three weeks before it started in Slovenia. "I wasn't emotionally prepared for it; on the morning of the last stage I was warming up and I didn't know if I could make it through," she said. "My body just felt exhausted, and counting down the kilometres felt so long. But I've learned a lot about how to get through long races, and how to take care of myself."

Stage seven hit the headlines after Wiggle-Honda's Elisa Longo Borghini reported that the peloton was verbally abused by fans.

British road race champion Lizzie Armitstead failed to start Saturday's penultimate stage, the day on which her Boels-Dolmans team-mate Megan Guarnier lost the overall lead to van der Breggen.

To do this week...

Go

Ryedale GP, July 19

Ten years on from its inaugural edition, this year's Ryedale GP once again features men's and women's road races forming part of British Cycling's road race series for each gender. However, the same roads around the spectacular Ampleforth Abbey in North Yorkshire will feature in this year's Junior Men's Road Race Championships, which takes place the day before (Saturday).

www.bcyorkshire.co.uk/ryedale-grand-prix

Ride

Tour of Cotswolds, July 19

Dover's Hill, which hosted the National Hill-Climb Championships in 2010, is among the challenges awaiting entrants in the fourth edition of this popular sportive. Two routes (50 and 80 miles) are on offer, both of which take in some of the less-explored parts of the Cotswolds.

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Read

Kings of the Road by Robert Dineen

Journalist Robert Dineen, best known for his acclaimed biography of Reg Harris, chronicles the rise, fall, and rise of cycling in Britain. The selection of pictures that detail some of our best cyclists but differ to the oft-used stock shots that accompany his engaging text, complete the book nicely.

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LAST WEEK

Monday July 6

Former world team pursuit champion Katie Archibald was named in GB's 30-rider squad for this week's European U23 and Junior Track Championships. GB technical director Shane Sutton said the team was "indicative of British Cycling's quest to develop young riders".

Tuesday July 7

Police are still appealing for witnesses after a cyclist died six days after being involved in an accident near Banbury, Oxfordshire. Rugby RCC member Mike Bloom, 74, sustained severe internal injuries in the collision with a lorry on the A361 on June 29.

Wednesday July 8

Jonathan Tiernan-Locke, the former Endura Racing rider who claimed alcohol was the reason for the biological passport anomalies that resulted in his current doping ban, was last week found guilty of drink driving and banned from driving for 17 months.

Thursday July 9

This year's National Track Championships will take place in Manchester over three days (September 25-27) instead of the usual five. Tickets go on Thursday July 16 for BC members via www.ticketmaster.co.uk/british-cycling, followed by general sale on July 28.

Friday July 10

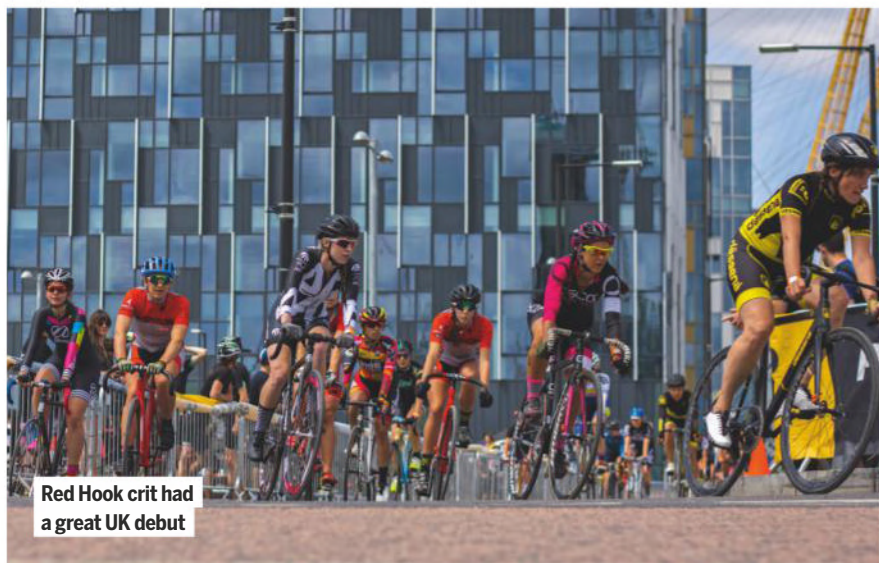
Cycling campaigners in Sheffield described the city council's decision to spend £160,000 on public art instead of a bike path as a "missed opportunity".

Saturday July 11

Briton Lewis Oliva took victory in the men's sprint at the Dublin International Track Grand Prix to earn himself vital qualification points for next year's Rio Olympics. He beat compatriot Callum Skinner in the final.

Sunday July 12

Annasley Park (Aprire-HSS Hire) was the best British finisher in the four-day Tour de Feminin stage race in the Czech Republic, coming 28th, 3.30 behind Russian victor Tatiana Antoshina.



Track bike crit a big hit

US-devised race series comes to Greenwich

Nick Bull

Fast and furious, with fans and falls: the Red Hook Criterium Series' debut venture into the UK lived up to its billing in London on Saturday.

North Greenwich hosted this country's first round of the world's leading track bike circuit race league, adding its name to existing rounds in Brooklyn, Milan and Barcelona.

Puerto Rican rider William Guzman and Spaniard Ainara Elbusto — both series regulars — won the men's and women's races respectively after going head-to-head with a large foreign contingent as well as local fixie enthusiasts.

And while racing under lights isn't particularly unique in this country (although a backdrop of Greenwich Peninsula's cable cars and the O2 Arena is), a series format that requires riders to qualify to compete in the main race made for several hours of fan-friendly excitement.

"I think it's an easy event for people to understand: it's a simple format, there aren't many tactics to learn, and there's action for several hours throughout the day," said organiser Dave Trimble, whose love of alley-cat racing was the inspiration behind the series.

"It seemed like an authentic Red Hook criterium, too. You never know how it's going to go when you take the series elsewhere, but it felt consistent with our other events," Trimble added.

Given the nature of the bikes permitted, not to mention over 200 riders attempting to earn one of 85 places in the men's final, the qualifying heats saw a number of the high-speed crashes that the series has become known for.

"Somebody compared it to MotoGP, which I think is accurate," said local rider Alec Briggs (Back2Back-Imago), who placed 13th. "You're on your limit the whole time, you have to focus so much on what you're doing, but it was so much more fun than I thought it was going to be."

"The racing is positive, and because of the bikes, you don't get people dive-bombing you anywhere near as much as in normal crits. There was a lot of respect between the riders."

The format is catching on, too. "There are a lot of track bike crits out there now, many of which have gone off the back of Red Hook," added Trimble.

"It's really caught on in Italy, there's a 10-race championship in the Netherlands, and it's caught on in Spain as well as on the west coast of America. We hope to come back to the Greenwich Peninsula next year, too!"

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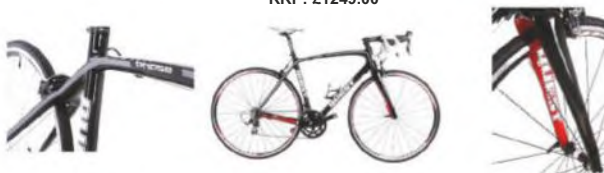
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Brits Abroad

Owen James, 19 Zappi's, Chievo, Italy

Where are you? It's a good place to live as we chill on the beach, but it's even better to ride because there are flat roads and the big mountains are only 30 minutes away. There's a huge cycling community and recently we tagged onto the back of a 90-strong chaingang.

How's the racing? Italy is the hardest racing for amateurs so if you want to make it professionally then it's the place to go. It can be difficult to get around on some days.

How's the form? I've had a few top-20s and at the Giro Pesche Nettarine I got into the break on the first day and wore the mountains jersey. I aim to get into breaks or finish in the select group as I have a kick.

How's life? I enjoy being abroad with the team because you get into a rhythm, a set diet and there are not as many distractions as home; I can fully focus on cycling. The sun is always out, there's always a big group riding so there's no excuses.

Anything you miss? I enjoy going home to wash my clothes, as I have to pay €4 out here for one wash! The Dave Rayner Fund helps me out massively financially. I miss my bed and the privacy of having a room to myself, though the boys are a great bunch and we all get on really well.

What's next? I've switched between road and track for a number of years, staying in the UK to complement both, but I've decided to largely focus on the road for a few years to get a pro team contract.

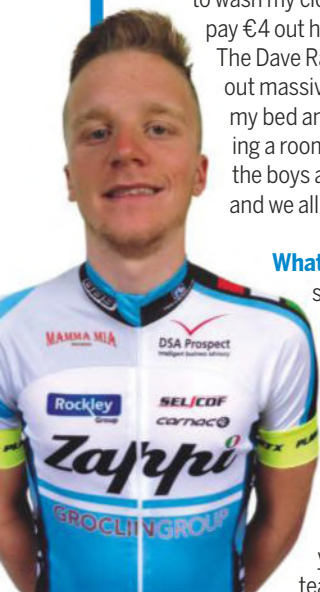


Photo: Alex Whitehead/SWPix.com

Team Wiggins's Chris Lawless won last Friday's Stockton Town Centre criterium, ahead of Dave McGowan (Pedal Heaven) and Graham Briggs (JLT-Condor). The result moved McGowan to within 12 points of Elite Circuit Series leader Jon Mould (One Pro Cycling) after three of eight rounds.

NFTO to sponsor new road race and sportive

Hereford-based outdoor clothing manufacturer and cycling team sponsor NFTO is backing a new National B-ranked road race and mass participation ride that will take place in the area later this year. The Hitter Road Race and Ride Herefordshire Sportive will form part of this year's Cotswold Hereford BMW Herefordshire Festival of Sport, which takes place on September 19-20. Visit www.herefordshirefestivalofsport.co.uk for more information.

CCC rider fined for racial abuse

Belarusian rider Branislau Samoilau was fined a month's wages after he reportedly racially abused another rider during this week's Tour of Austria. Samoilau, who rides for the second division CCC Sprandi Pokowice squad, is alleged to have said a derogatory term to MTN-Qhubeka's Eritrean rider Natnael Berhane during the race's fourth stage last Wednesday. A UCI statement said the former Movistar rider "apologised and offered to donate one month's salary to team MTN-Qhubeka's foundation" and that "all parties were satisfied with the outcome". Spaniard Victor De La Parte (Team Voralberg) was the race's surprise winner.

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THE BIG QUESTION

When and how did you learn to ride a bike?

I was five years old. My grandmother sat my bike and me at the top of a hill, and let go. My grandfather was at the bottom to catch me. Unfortunately, when he did, I head-butted him in a delicate area — and that was the end of that outing.

Martin Petrie

My dad bought me my first proper bike — I think I was about five or six and was left out on a large balcony to learn how to 'handle' it, as it was safer than the road. I proceeded to cycle off the balcony 12ft into the neighbour's garden and ended up in hospital for the night.

Vinnie Bennett

I learned to ride without any stabilisers at the age of four in 1976. My dad took me to a park in Belmont, Lancashire. The classic dad holding on to the saddle and said he would stay holding on, and then he let me go. It's one of my very earliest memories, as I still remember the fear/elation once I realised my dad had let me go.

Joe Green

I was about five or six. I told my dad as he left for work that by the time he got home I'd be able to ride down the drive without stabilisers. I had a packet of Parma Violet sweets (big in the 1970s) and I had one as

a reward every time I made it all the way without falling off. And I could do it by the time he got home — he was so proud.

Helen Michael

In the early 1970s on a Raleigh Chopper trying to emulate Evel Knievel by jumping over some of the other kids on the estate.

Neil McAlister

When I learned to ride I thought I was being clever and tried it with my eyes closed. I ended up riding over the neighbour's prized roses and geraniums. He was not a happy chap.

Rick Lankshear

My first bike was put together by my granddad from parts he had in his shed. He said he'd bring home some stabilisers after work, which he did — in the meantime I'd learned to ride it without. I can still remember the brief look of disappointment on his face.

Steve Knight

My dad set me off in a big circle, which then continuously decreased in size till I crashed in the middle.

Bradley Ashworth

It was 1975, I was two and had a tricycle. My older sister, six at the time, had just



Learning to ride a bike: fortunately you only have to do it once

got her first two-wheeler. Apparently, I turned to my dad and said, "I can ride a two-wheeler," grabbed the bike with no stabilisers and rode it down the street and back. My dad was flabbergasted!

John Murray

Next week's big question...

Why do you think there are so many crashes at the Tour de France?

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Letters

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Do it like the Danes

STAR
LETTER

I have recently watched the video of Chris Boardman's tour of Copenhagen. Oh, how the UK could benefit from a system like they have: cars and cyclists living together in harmony and not so much as a word of offence.

More than enough times we are reading of cyclists being knocked down and seriously injured. Here in Northern Ireland in the space of several weeks there has been one man critically injured on a main carriageway, and more recently two sisters knocked off their bikes and injured in a hit and run.

Truth be told, there is a minority, and I mean minority, of cyclists who can be ignorant towards motorists and give cyclists a bad name.

All we ask is a bit of courtesy and especially a bit more room. After all, you wouldn't pass a horse as fast and as close as possible, so why should us cyclists be any different?

Michael McQuade, email

collected the bike that morning the staff knew me and as I explained about previous problems the manager decided to swap my bike for a brand new one!

I was also given a £50 voucher for my inconvenience and the promise that if the same bottom bracket problem occurs again they will upgrade my bike. I thought this was a great service and wanted to say a big thanks.

Kieran James, Doncaster

The real Storey

In reply to Stu Chapman (*CW*, July 2), apparently, owing to her disability, Dame Sarah Storey can only operate the brakes and gears with one hand, and she was required to ride at the rear in the interests of bunch safety. This meant, of course, that she was unable to compete. For the technically minded, both brake cables work from one lever, with the rear brake coming on fractionally before the front.

Mike Baker, email

Hooray for Halfords

I have had my road bike two days short of a year, and it has been back to Halfords four times for bottom bracket issues. Luckily I'd taken out the three-year cover for maintenance so I wasn't out of pocket.

After the fifth time of it being in, I went out for a ride and the bottom bracket started to creak and make a horrible noise just after a mile or so. I passed Halfords so I called in. As I'd

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Regarding Stu Chapman's letter about Sarah Storey's Women's Tour performance one assumes you've never raced in a road race or you'll understand that: a) it's not easy, and b) it's not always the strongest at the front the whole time.

Can I suggest that before criticising you enter a 3/4 road race and try and finish in the main bunch? Or win it.

Nick Clarke, email

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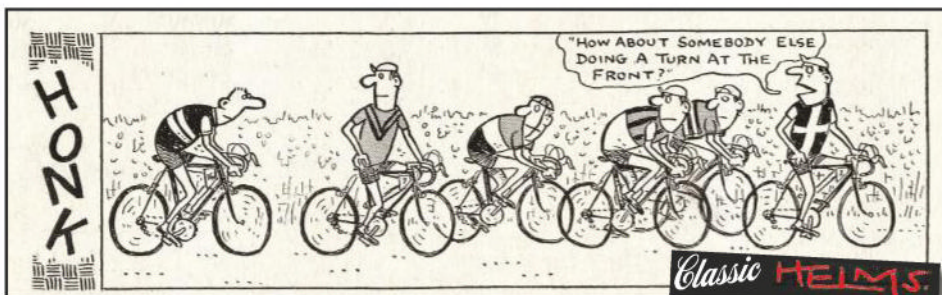
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Johnny Helms was *Cycling Weekly's* resident cartoonist from February 1946 until November 2009.

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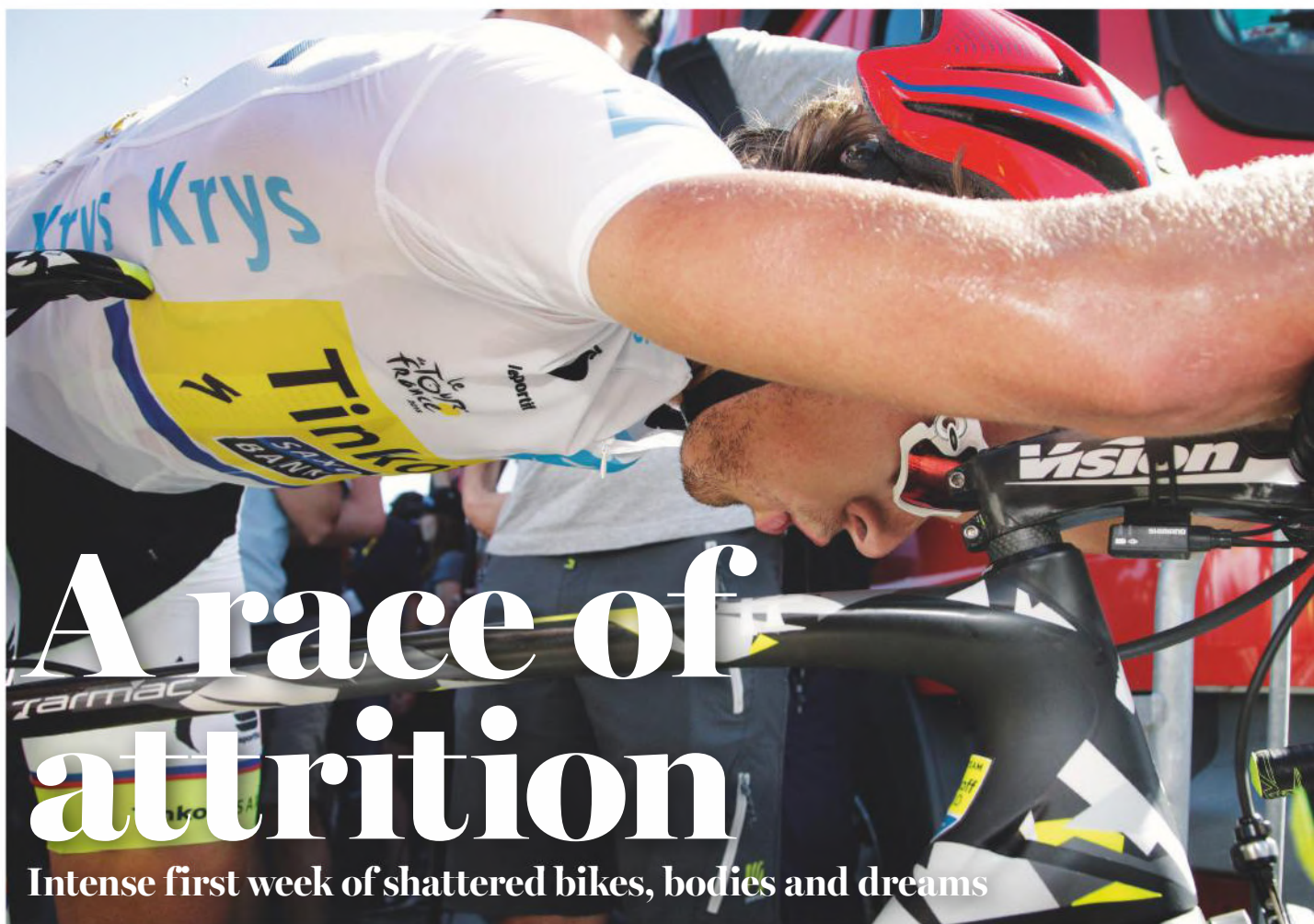
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Tour de France

Photo: Eric Feferberg/AFP/Getty Images

The first week of the world's biggest bike race made for excellent viewing, with exploits, battles and crashes aplenty. Here's the lowdown





A race of attrition

Intense first week of shattered bikes, bodies and dreams

The first week. It's not what it used to be. As the 2015 Tour de France entered its first rest day, the riders couldn't help but notice just how unpredictable, intense and stressful the opening nine stages of the race had been.

"It's a war zone," said Movistar's Alex Dowsett. "Normally in races once the break goes there's time for a little chat but we are straight on it, straight away."

"It seems to be a bit more nervous than before," said MTN-Qhubeka's Steve Cummings, who last rode the Tour in 2012 with BMC. "I know I've been away for three years so maybe it's just a shock to my system."

As the bunch rolled through the saturated palette of the French countryside, the finish on the Mûr-de-Bretagne, five days after stage three to Mur de Huy,

Belt-up, Bramati!

What was meant to be a video to show Etixx-Quick Step's joy at Tony Martin's win on stage four, ended in suspension for directeur sportif Davide Bramati after he was filmed not wearing a seatbelt while at the wheel of a team car.

In the video released by the team, the Italian is seen enthusiastically celebrating, but was later banned from driving during the race on stage six.

Paying respects

The Tour de France paid its respects on stage five as riders passed through the battlefields of the Somme and alongside a number of military cemeteries. Orica-GreenEdge wore special armbands to mark the Anzac Centenary.

Sagan, so close

Peter Sagan just can't seem to win a stage, but it's not for the want of trying. He has finished in the top five 19 times since he last crossed

the line first at the Tour, on stage seven in 2013 between Montpellier and Albi.

Froome noses ahead

Team Sky continued their marginal gains approach to the Tour, as Chris Froome was spotted wearing what looked like a nose ring on stage four. Beady-eyed fans noticed the yellow plastic ring known as the 'Turbine' and created by Rhinomod, which is said to dilate the nostrils and increase airflow through the nose. Froome tested the device at last year's Vuelta.

Basso cancer shock

Former Giro d'Italia winner Ivan Basso left the Tour on Monday's rest day after being diagnosed with testicular cancer.

The 37-year-old Tinkoff-Saxo rider announced his diagnosis at the team's press conference in Pau. "We realised after my fall on the fifth stage," he said. "That day I fell and I hit my testicle on the saddle, like I had so many times before. But it started to bother me, and then

served to further sift the general classification. A fourth stage over seven sectors of cobbles had already given it a good shake-up.

"I think I was more prepared mentally for the racing, the stress of the first week," said Orica's Simon Yates, riding his second Tour. "Until you actually do it you don't realise how stressful it is."

Defending champion Vincenzo Nibali (Astana) was expected to be on the attack. Instead, he suffered an off-day on the Mûr-de-Bretagne and sat on the Tour's chartered flight from Brittany to the first rest day in Pau nursing a deficit of two minutes, 22 seconds and languishing in 13th overall. Meanwhile French hopeful Thibaut Pinot (FDJ) had waved *au revoir* to his hopes of stepping back onto the Paris podium as he sat 29th overall, eight minutes and five seconds from Froome.

It may have been too early for anyone to say the Tour had been won. But for some, one week down, the Tour had definitely been lost.



Basso: forced out of the Tour

this morning we went for a visit to a urologist here in Pau. The scan showed the presence of tumour cells in the left testicle. Now I have to go straight home to have surgery."

Our Tour experts

Malcolm Elliott

The former bunch galloper is driving VIPs on the Tour

Tours ridden: 2

"After stage nine, the sprinters have got days and days of relative misery before there's anything for them again.

"There will be a point in the mountain stages at which the gruppetto will form. You'll hear one or two shouts of 'gruppetto' and it will be towards the back. That sound rings around; it will be a bit of a rallying call.

"You'll see a few guys who will be going off up the road and you'll sometimes get one or two shouts of, 'Where do you think you're going? You'll be back with us sooner or later!' And they often are.

"There is so little point in trying to finish five minutes ahead of the gruppetto and using a

Cédric Vasseur

Our resident Frenchman reports from a motorbike for TV

Tours ridden: 10

"We've known for a while that Alexis Vuillermoz, who won at Mûr-de-Bretagne, has a lot of climbing ability. But he's never been able to beat Chris Froome and the others in the most difficult race in the world.

"He's not considered a leader, he's a helper to Romain Bardet and Jean-Christophe Péraud, but Ag2r want him to strike out and take the leadership if the other two fail. I'm sure that stage victory won't be his only one. He'll win another mountain stage in this Tour.

"From the motorbike, I get to see the riders up close and Rigoberto Urán impresses me. I

whole load of energy in the process.

"I rode up the Col d'Aubisque recently with Stephen Roche, where he won 30 years ago, and he was telling me that even he has been dropped by the gruppetto in the past, when he was having problems with his knee in about 1992.

"There is always a bit of looking around. Let's say you're Mark Cavendish and looking round for André Greipel and he's not there, there will be a part of him hoping that he's had enough and thrown in the towel.

"It could be somebody standing between him and victory on the Champs-Élysées."

know he had a bad Giro d'Italia, but I think, 'no one talks about him.' I saw him puncture on the stage to Amiens and it was with such strength that he closed the gap alone.

"Even if he doesn't have a big palmarès, he could end up springing a surprise. OK, he doesn't have a team for the mountains, but he can take time by shooting off at the end of the stage, and perhaps make the podium. It could be like in the Giro last year: we end up with two Colombians — Quintana and Urán — on the final podium."

transition stages will be everything.

"The seconds gained in this first week are all significant but when you lose time in the mountains, it can be minutes tumbling away. There will also be psychology at play. Those 10 seconds Nibali dropped at Mûr-de-Bretagne must have been a worry to him because they were fair game — not just down to misfortune. In retrospect, perhaps the incident with Froome back at Le Havre reflects on his form. Was there already a little voice in his head telling him his legs aren't quite there and he's a little nervous?"



Stage 4

Seraing > Cambrai 223.5km

Tuesday July 7

Martin finally takes yellow

Gritty German solos to stage win

Hugh Gladstone

Denied by seconds for two days running, Tony Martin (Etixx-Quick Step) finally claimed the yellow jersey he'd been craving with a bold lone stage win at the end of a gripping afternoon on the dusty cobbles of northern France.

Did the cobbles do much damage?

The race inevitably split but most overall Tour contenders

came through the seven sectors unscathed. However, as the Tour returned to its homeland after three stages in Benelux, one of France's overall hopes Thibaut Pinot (FDJ) lost time for the third day running — as well as his cool — when his team car didn't turn up quick enough for a bike change.

Did anyone try their luck?

Vincenzo Nibali (Astana) put in some powerful efforts and Sky's Chris Froome also got stuck in. But drier conditions than when the Tour tackled the *pavé* last year saw a larger group of 35 stay together and finish just behind Martin.

When did Martin attack?

The powerful German put in a big dig inside the last four kilometres, having not long recovered from chasing back after a rear puncture on the final sector. Martin had swapped bikes with teammate Matteo Trentin, leaving him sitting too high and with the brakes the opposite way round to his usual set-up.

That could have been disastrous...

Yes, and Martin admitted he nearly messed up on the last turn. But a technical finish through town was to the lone attacker's benefit; he finished with a three-second margin.

STAGE INFO

WEATHER
Mostly dry; some showers

TERRAIN
Lightly rolling, cobbles



The cobbles proved drier and less treacherous than in 2014

DAN MARTIN ON THE COBBLES

Climbers out of their comfort zone

"This will be the first time I've raced on the cobbles as a pro," said Cannondale-Garmin's Dan Martin in Seraing, the start town in the Ardennes and far more familiar Classics territory for the Irishman than that which characterised the latter part of the stage. "I've never done Paris-Roubaix before. I raced over the cobbles a little bit as a junior but that was completely different."

But for Martin (right) and other lightweight GC hopefuls, there

could be no climbing off or quietly slipping to the back and letting the burly Classics men get on with it. The Tour on the *pavé* has a completely different dynamic to the cobbled Classics. Climbers are forced to meddle where they shouldn't: Nairo Quintana rubbing shoulders with John Degenkolb; Alberto Contador seeking lines in the gutter.

"He was very nervous before the start, as were all the other GC contenders," said Saxo DS

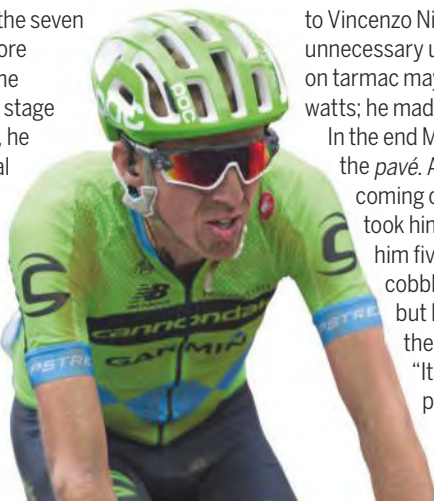


Sean Yates of Contador, citing the opening-week mantra about staying out of trouble, not losing time and gaining it if the opportunity arose. The Spaniard had prepared like the Classics men in April, recceing the seven sectors three days before the Tour. He'd also come equipped. Starting the stage on comfy 26mm tyres, he swapped to an identical bike with wider, 28mm tyres just after the first sector. "If there hadn't been a chance to change bikes, he could still have gone to the finish," said Yates, illustrating the

GC riders' need for contingency. "At the same time, he didn't want to do the first 120km with all that [28mm] width."

For a GC contender, energy must be conserved. According to Vincenzo Nibali's camp, unnecessary use of wider tyres on tarmac may have cost him five watts; he made a similar change.

In the end Martin was fine on the pavé. A tussle for position coming on to a sector took him down and cost him five minutes. "The cobbles were fine but I slipped off before them," he explained. "It's all about positioning."



RESULTS

ON THE PODIUM



Tony Martin
Etixx-Quick Step



André Greipel
Lotto-Soudal



Joaquín Rodríguez
Katusha



Peter Sagan
Tinkoff-Saxo

1. Tony Martin (Ger) Etixx-Quick Step in 5:28.58

- John Degenkolb (Ger) Giant-Alpecin at 0.03
- Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo
- Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC
- Edvald Boasson Hagen (Nor) MTN-Qhubeka
- Nacer Bouhanni (Fra) Cofidis
- Jacopo Guarnieri (Ita) Katusha
- Tony Gallopin (Fra) Lotto-Soudal
- Zdeněk Štybar (Cze) Etixx-Quick Step
- Bryan Coquard (Fra) Europcar all at same time
- Others 12. Mark Cavendish (GBR) Etixx-Quick Step at 0.03;
- Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana; 17. Chris Froome (GBR) Team Sky; 19. Alberto Contador (Esp) Tinkoff-Saxo; 23. Nairo Quintana (Col) Movistar all at same time

Overall classification after stage four

- Tony Martin (Ger) Etixx-Quick Step in 12:40.26
- Chris Froome (GBR) Team Sky at 0.12
- Tejay van Garderen (USA) BMC at 0.25
- Tony Gallopin (Fra) Lotto-Soudal at 0.38
- Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.39
- Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC at 0.40
- Rigoberto Urán (Col) Etixx-Quick Step at 0.46
- Alberto Contador (Esp) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.48
- Geraint Thomas (GBR) Team Sky at 1.15
- Zdeněk Štybar (Cze) Etixx-Quick Step at 1.16
- Other 30. Thibaut Pinot (Fra) FDJ at 6.30.

Stage 4 in pictures



Left: Thibaut Pinot's run of bad luck continues after a mechanical means he

loses another three minutes on his rivals
Above: It's a miserable day in the saddle for

Alex Dowsett who crashed and rode the final 20km of the stage alone, to finish dead last





Above: Vincenzo Nibali attempts to recreate his performance on the pavé last year with repeated attacks off the front of the bunch
Below: FDJ's Matthieu Ladagnous has a laugh with local fans as he waits for a wheel change



Above: From agony to ecstasy for Tony Martin. Days after missing out on wearing yellow, his late attack with 3km to go pays off as he solos to the stage win and into the maillot jaune
Main: The peloton snakes its way past the Citadel of Namur in Wallonia, Belgium, a fortress dating back to the 10th century



Photos: Graham Watson, Yuzuru Sunada, Cor Vos, Offside / L'Equipe

Stage 5

Arras > Amiens 189.5km

Wednesday July 8

Greipel beats Cavendish. Again

Big German secures his second stage win

On the first true bunch sprint of the 2015 Tour, Mark Cavendish (Etixx-Quick Step) missed out as André Greipel (Lotto-Soudal) claimed his second win ahead of Peter Sagan (Tinkoff-Saxo) with Cav in third.

What went wrong for Cav?

The Manx Missile became detached from lead-out man Mark Renshaw approaching the line in Amiens and had to launch his sprint early in

order to get around Greipel and Alexander Kristoff.

So he just wasn't fast enough?

His speed waned just as the German kicked into top gear while a fast-finishing Sagan left it too late. Cav was perhaps missing the edge after chasing hard earlier in the day, with 67km to race, following a puncture.

It wasn't all bad news for Quick Step.

For the first day in this year's Tour, the race lead didn't change hands and Tony Martin got another day in yellow. The GC favourites all

finished in the lead group too, although there was another scare for Thibaut Pinot (FDJ), who crashed with 25km to go and had to chase hard.

Why all these crashes?

Wet roads, blustery winds and occasional pinch points brought riders down throughout the day. Nacer Bouhanni (Cofidis) and Jack Bauer (Cannondale-Garmin) both hit the deck and abandoned. The GC teams were also riding hard into a headwind, eventually instigating a major split with 75km to go when they'd caught the sole breakaway rider, Pierre-Luc Perichon (Bretagne-Séché).

STAGE INFO

WEATHER Wind, rain
TERRAIN Flat



Greipel outfoxed Cav to take a second win

THE TOUR'S HARDMEN

From Amiens, in agony

After a working week of crashes, the peloton on stage five was full of the walking wounded. Alex Dowsett had battled through stage four alone, 10 minutes behind the penultimate rider up the road and 10 seconds ahead of the broomwagon, having slashed his elbow open in a crash. He could hear the *voiture balai* behind him, offering an easy way out as he crawled to the finish. Stage five wasn't much better.

"I just had nothing from the word go," he said. "I think my body had just shut down. I was

flat-out today and my average heart rate was 115bpm.

"The race has split into two now," he added. "The guys that are still racing, and the guys that are just struggling through."

This is the Tour de France. More than at any other race, riders will fight through the pain barrier to make it to the finish. Whether it's the thought of getting one day closer to Paris or the hope that tomorrow it might feel better, Tour riders won't give up unless there is no other choice.

"It's the only reason I'm still



riding," said Greg Henderson as he gingerly climbed onto his Ridley ahead of stage five, nursing broken ribs from the mass pile-up two days earlier. "I can't even put my clothes on. The way to do it is just to keep suffering."

"Some say I was tough as nails today," tweeted his team-mate Adam Hansen the previous evening, having dislocated his shoulder on stage two. "Truth is, I cried like a child at one point."

The winner of stage five's combativity prize was Michael

Matthews (pictured), another stage-three casualty who gallantly rode the final 60km of stage five alone. He probably didn't feel much like going onto the podium

to receive his prize; when he returned to the team bus, he crawled up the stairs on all fours like a sleepy toddler.

It was painful to do, and painful to watch, but his Tour wasn't ready to come to an end. He'd start the next day and go through it all again.



ON THE PODIUM



Tony Martin
Etixx-Quick Step



André Greipel
Lotto-Soudal



Joaquín Rodríguez
Katusha



Peter Sagan
Tinkoff-Saxo

RESULTS

1. André Greipel (Ger) Lotto-Soudal in 4:39.00

2. Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo
3. Mark Cavendish (GBr) Etixx-Quick Step
4. Alexander Kristoff (Nor) Katusha
5. Edvald Boasson Hagen (Nor) MTN-Qhubeka
6. John Degenkolb (Ger) Giant-Alpecin
7. Arnaud Démare (Fra) FDJ
8. Bryan Coquard (Fra) Europcar
9. Davide Cimolai (Ita) Lampre-Merida
10. Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC Racing all at same time
- Others 19. Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana; 22. Tony Martin (Ger) Etixx-Quick Step
28. Chris Froome (GBr) Team Sky
32. Tejay van Garderen (USA) BMC Racing
34. Nairo Quintana (Col) Movistar all at same time.

Overall classification after stage five

1. Tony Martin (Ger) Etixx-Quick Step in 12:40.26

2. Chris Froome (GBr) Team Sky at 0.12
3. Tejay van Garderen (USA) BMC Racing at 0.25
4. Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.33
5. Tony Gallopin (Fra) Lotto-Soudal at 0.38
6. Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC Racing at 0.40
7. Rigoberto Uran (Col) Etixx-Quick Step at 0.40
8. Alberto Contador (Esp) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.48
9. Geraint Thomas (GBr) Team Sky at 1.15
10. Zdeněk Štybar (Cze) Etixx-Quick Step at 1.16
- Others 13. Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana at 1.50; 17. Nairo Quintana (Col) Movistar at 2.08.

Stage 5 in pictures



Left: Team Sky's Peter Kennaugh collects supplies



Right: Cofidis come a collective cropper

Below: A fragmented peloton bisect rural France en route to Amiens





Right: The South African Memorial provides a sobering background as the pack passes through Longueval



Below: FDJ's Benoît Vaugrenard sits grimacing amid the melee after the wet roads claim yet more victims



Stage 6

Abbeville > Le Havre 191.5km

Thursday July 9

Martin's dreams come crashing down

Yellow jersey forced to quit race after spill

Hugh Gladstone

In a day of mixed fortunes for Etixx-Quick Step, yellow jersey Tony Martin crashed out of the race while Zdenek Stybar took a late flyer to win the stage ahead of Peter Sagan (Tinkoff-Saxo). Although Martin limped in, a broken collarbone would rule him out of starting the following day.

Was it all about Etixx?

Nope. Another big

story was Eritrea's Daniel Teklehaimanot's commandeering of the polka dot jersey — the first ever African to wear it. A member of the early three-man break, the MTN-Qhubeka rider snapped up top points on the three fourth-category climbs as the stage made its way down the coastline to the mouth of the Seine.

Who else was with him?

Perrig Quéménéur (Europcar) made the break for the third time already this Tour and took the combativity prize. Cofidis's Kenneth Vanbilsen attacked the other two on the edge of the finishing town and

held off the bunch until three kilometres to go.

Who caused the crash?

Vincenzo Nibali (Astana) and Chris Froome (Sky), who both fell, squabbled about who was to blame. In actuality it was Martin himself who touched a wheel.

Did they kiss and make up?

It seems so, after Froome visited Nibali's team bus. "We are not footballers, we are cyclists," noted the Italian. Movistar's Nairo Quintana also fell, but no one lost time, because the crash happened inside the final 3km.

STAGE INFO

WEATHER Warm, breezy
TERRAIN Undulating

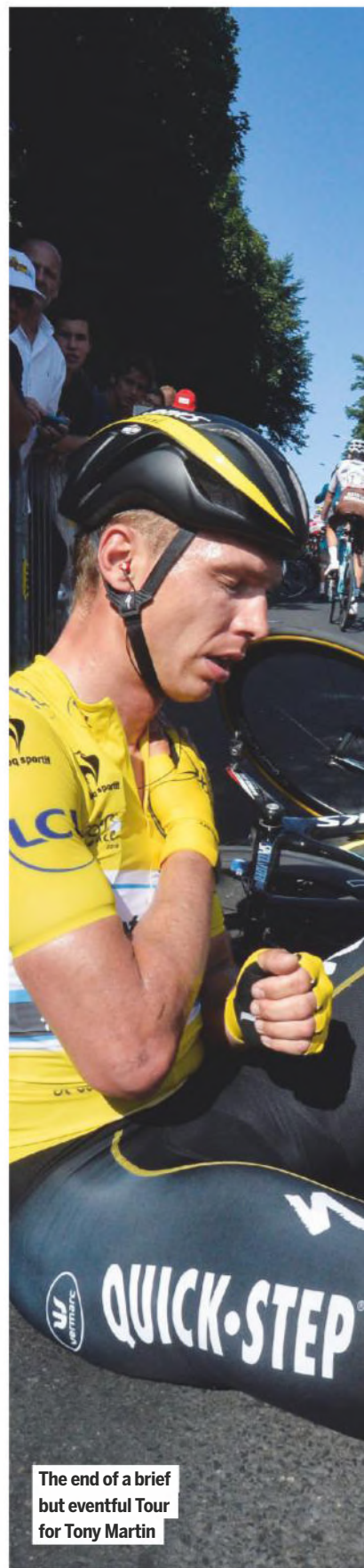


RESULTS

1. Zdenek Stybar (Cze) Etixx-Quick Step in 4:53.46
2. Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.02
3. Bryan Coquard (Fra) Europcar
4. John Degenkolb (Ger) Giant-Alpecin
5. Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC Racing
6. Tony Gallopin (Fra) Lotto-Soudal
7. Edvald Boasson Hagen (Nor) MTN-Qhubeka
8. Davide Cimolai (Ita) Lampre-Merida
9. Julien Simon (Fra) Cofidis
10. Gorka Izagirre (Esp) Movistar all same time

Overall classification after stage six

1. Tony Martin (Ger) Etixx-Quick Step in 22:13:14
2. Chris Froome (GBR) Team Sky at 0.12
3. Tejay van Garderen (USA) BMC Racing at 0.25
4. Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.27
5. Tony Gallopin (Fra) Lotto-Soudal at 0.38
6. Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC Racing at 0.40
7. Rigoberto Uran (Col) Etixx-Quick Step at 0.46
8. Alberto Contador (Esp) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.48
9. Zdenek Stybar (Cze) Etixx-Quick Step at 1:04
10. Geraint Thomas (GBR) Team Sky at 1:15
- Others 13. Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana at 1:50; 17. Nairo Quintana (Col) Movistar at 2:08; 19. Jean-Christophe Péraud (Fra) Ag2r at 2:19; 20. Andrew Talansky (USA) Cannondale-Garmin at 2:51; 21. Romain Bardet (Fra) Ag2r at 3:06; 30. Thibaut Pinot (Fra) FDJ at 6:30.



The end of a brief but eventful Tour for Tony Martin



STYBAR'S CONTINGENCY PLAN

Etixx ride the rough with the smooth

It was all smiles at Etixx-Quick Step in Abbeville. Mark Cavendish might have been getting increasingly frustrated by what had been happening in the sprints, but the sun was shining, Tony Martin was in yellow and the riders had spotted a good-looking woman waiting outside the bus. A soigneur was sent down to hand her a yellow bottle, explaining that the riders had awarded her the 'prettiest woman outside the bus' prize.

As she took the bottle, the windows of the bus banged and rattled to the thumps of a sky-high group of lads, ready to take on the world. Five hours later and that same group of lads were pushing their race leader, clutching his shoulder, across the line in Le Havre. Up the road Zdenek Stybar had taken a popular stage win but the celebrations were muted; Etixx's Tour had taken yet another funny turn.

"It's bittersweet," said Cavendish of the day's action. "The finish was pretty chaotic and at that speed you don't slide or anything. If you tangle, you just go over and down."

In a way, things had gone even more awry than the final result reflected.

"Plan A was to keep the yellow jersey and bring Cav for the sprint," reflected Stybar (below) after the stage.

But the three-time cyclo-cross world champion had noticed Cav stall when Martin crashed on the tricky final kilometre rise and instigated Etixx's contingency operation.

"I saw he was in difficulties and I was on the wheel of [Peter] Sagan and [Greg] Van Avermaet, but saw they didn't have helpers anymore," he explained. "I thought, if I go and even get a little gap, it would be difficult for them to close it."

With a climb that plateaued into the finish straight, the finale was not so different from when Stybar attacked Van Avermaet to win Strade Bianche earlier this year. "I just went," said the Czech Tour debutant. "It was a very spontaneous attack." But at least something had worked out for the team.

ON THE PODIUM



Tony Martin
Etixx-Quick Step



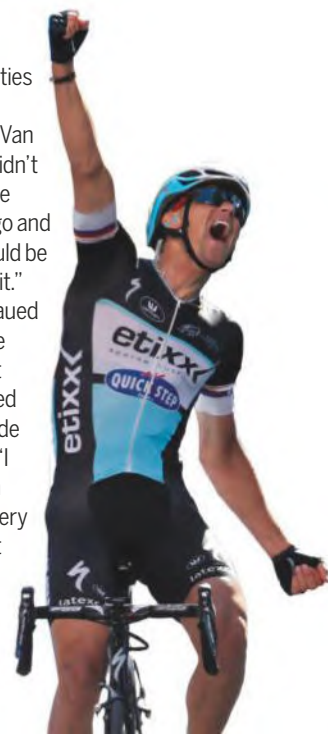
André Greipel
Lotto-Soudal



Daniel Teklehaimanot
MTN-Qhubeka



Peter Sagan
Tinkoff-Saxo



Stage 6 in pictures



Photo: Cor Vos, Graham Watson



Left: MTN-Qhubeka's Daniel Teklehaimanot leads the day's break on the way to becoming the first African to wear the polka-dot jersey

Below: Etixx-Quick Step's Zdenek Stybar wins the uphill sprint to claim victory in Le Havre

Main: Yellow jersey Tony Martin is helped to the finish line by Etixx-Quick Step team mates after breaking his collarbone in a crash that forced his retirement from the race



Bottom: Sky's Chris Froome waits for a post-crash wheel change on a stage that saw him move into the overall race lead



Stage 7

Livarot > Fougères 190.5km

Friday July 10

Cav ends Tour stage win drought

Manxman breaks duck in Fougères thriller

Richard Abraham

Mark Cavendish toppled fortress Greipel as the Tour entered the medieval castle town of Fougères. Cav finally got the win he was looking for, with the German second and Peter Sagan third. After Tony Martin's overnight abandon, Chris Froome pulled on the yellow jersey once again.

Why did Cav look so happy on the line?

STAGE INFO

WEATHER Sunny, calm
TERRAIN Flat



He had waited 728 days to put his hands in the air at the Tour de France. It was additionally poignant following his team-mate Martin's overnight withdrawal from the race due to a broken collarbone, and was Etixx-Quick Step's second consecutive win of this year's Tour to make three in total.

Is this Cav back to his best?

His sprint was timed almost to perfection; rather than launch early as he has so far this Tour he emerged from Greipel's wheel to deploy his kick with 100m to go. He admitted he'd almost left it too late.

What else happened today?

Daniel Teklehaimanot (MTN-Qhubeka) got in the early break again and was joined by Kristijan Durasek, Luis Angel Maté, Anthony Delaplace and Brice Feillu. The Eritrean grabbed the early KoM points to keep himself in polka dots for another day.

Any changes overall?

Following a day of relative respite for the bunch, Froome found himself back in yellow. He technically led the race for the stage too, but was not entitled — and neither wanted, out of respect for Martin — to wear yellow through the sun-bleached Norman countryside.



Cavendish celebrates with new best mate, Matteo Trentin

VIVE LA DIFFERENCE

Stirring sleepy settlements — here comes the Tour!

After a Grand Départ à *l'étranger*, the Tour was back in its true home. Forget the mountains; *la France profonde* is where the Tour truly resides. France has the same population as the UK but spread over double the area; with its rolling fields and tiny hamlets, people wait for years for something like this to happen and welcome the travelling circus with a mixture of vigorous festivity and wide-eyed disbelief.

Here an old proverb of the Tour de France caravan rings true. "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day," it goes. "Give a man a cheap green Skoda hat and you'll put a smile on his face for the rest of the week" (we might have just made that up). With this in mind, *caravanistes* have pre-perfected the art of firing their sponsor-branded tat; aim low, shoot fast, reload,



repeat. Never has happiness been so ruthlessly dispensed.

The Tour uses the same palette as the rural French summertime. Golden yellow of the wheat fields and lonely postboxes, green like the hedgerows and copses, white like the cows and the bright sky, and polka dot like the red gingham tablecloths in the local bar. Or, in Normandy, where the Tour passed on stage seven, those colours come from the rich cheeses, the verdant apple orchards, the chalky chateaux and the deep, speckled red of a *tarte aux framboises* gleaming in the patisserie window.

On one stage CW stopped in a tiny French village on the race

route for lunch. We dined outside the Eclipse bar, an establishment yet to be dragged kicking and screaming out of the 1970s in a place where the second biggest commercial operation is Gilles from down the road selling his 17-year-old Citroën Xsara. In the yard were some tables; Jupiler was on tap, saucisson were gleefully shoved in baguettes, and the local DJ came to sound engineer the deafening local Abba tribute act. It was wonderful.

"We'll be cheering on the French riders today," the DJ told the crowds. "You'll know which ones they are. They'll be in a big group, about 15 minutes after everyone else."

ON THE PODIUM



Chris Froome
Team Sky



André Greipel
Lotto-Soudal



Daniel Teklehaimanot
MTN-Qhubeka



Peter Sagan
Tinkoff-Saxo

RESULTS

1. Mark Cavendish (GBR) Etixx-Quick Step in 4:27.25

2. André Greipel (Ger) Lotto-Soudal
3. Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo
4. John Degenkolb (Ger) Giant-Alpecin
5. Alexander Kristoff (Nor) Katusha
6. Arnaud Demare (Fra) FDJ
7. Tyler Farrar (USA) MTN-Qhubeka
8. Reinardt Janse Van Rensburg (RSA) MTN-Qhubeka
9. Davide Cimolai (Ita) Lampre-Merida
10. Sam Bennett (Irl) Bora-Argon 18 all at same time
- Other 24.** Chris Froome (GBR) Team Sky at same time

Overall classification after stage seven

1. Chris Froome (GBR) Team Sky in 26:40.51
2. Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.11
3. Tejay van Garderen (USA) BMC Racing at 0.13
4. Tony Gallopin (Fra) Lotto-Soudal at 0.26
5. Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC Racing at 0.28
6. Rigoberto Uran (Col) Etixx-QuickStep at 0.34
7. Alberto Contador (Esp) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.36
8. Zdenek Stybar (Cze) Etixx-QuickStep at 0.52
9. Geraint Thomas (GBR) Team Sky at 1.03
10. Warren Barguil (Fra) Giant-Alpecin at 1.07
- Other 12.** Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana at 1.38;
16. Nairo Quintana (Col) Movistar at 1.56

Stage 7 in pictures



Above: Mark Cavendish gave the Brits waiting in Fougères plenty to celebrate with a perfectly timed sprint to take his 26th Tour stage

Below: Africa's first King of the Mountains, MTN-Qhubeka's Daniel Teklehaimanot, gets involved in an early breakaway

Right: The peloton funnels down Rue de la Libération as the race passes through the rural village of Lignières-Orgères





Left: It's been a while but the Manx Missile is back on the top step. Having gone too early in previous stages, the 30-year-old came off André Greipel's wheel to take his first Tour stage win since 2013 — for pub quizzers and stat fans, that's a 728-day hiatus

Right: Will Chris Froome be in yellow? Following Tony Martin's abandon, the 2013 winner finally appeared in black and blue

Below: For he's a jolly good Feillu: getting close to their heroes is what kids' dreams are made of, especially in France



Below: Tinkoff-Saxo look well drilled and organised as they protect white jersey Peter Sagan, the Slovak edging ever closer to a fourth consecutive green jersey



Stage 8

Rennes > Mûr-de-Bretagne 181.5km

Saturday July 11

Vuillermoz wins one for France

Froome aggressive while Nibali falters

Hugh Gladstone

France's Alexis Vuillermoz (Ag2r) gave the home nation their first stage victory of this year's Tour when he won ahead of Ireland's Dan Martin (Cannondale-Garmin) atop the tortuously steep and straight climb at Mûr-de-Bretagne. Adam Yates (Orica-GreenEdge) and Chris Froome showed well, but Vincenzo Nibali faltered.

Alexis who?

Steep uphill finales seem to be quite the 27-year-old's speciality — he was also third at Huy on stage three. The

one-time accounting student spent his formative years at CC Etupes — the same club that Yates and Thibaut Pinot came through. Pinot again lost time.

What happened?

Cannondale, Tinkoff-Saxo and BMC chased down the early breaks for their respective stage hopefuls — Martin, Peter Sagan and Greg van Avermaet. Vuillermoz launched a move that pulled Yates and Simon Geschke (Giant-Alpecin) clear on the steeper first half of the 2km climb. After Froome dragged the bunch back to them as the gradient eased, Vuillermoz went again, solo.

Where did Martin come from?

The Irishman was frustrated after getting boxed in. "I had the legs," he said. "I just wasn't on the right side of the group." When he eventually did break clear, the winner had already gone and Martin could only chase for second.

Meanwhile behind...

Most of the main GC contenders were in the following group, but Nibali got dropped. "We are not going to lose the Tour because of 10 seconds on the Mûr-de-Bretagne," asserted Astana sports director Giuseppe Martinelli.



French bliss: Vuillermoz scores a home win for Ag2r

STAGE INFO

WEATHER Warm, sunny
TERRAIN Lightly rolling, steep finale



Photo: Graham Watson.

HEARTLAND OF FRENCH CYCLING

La région des champions

"In Brittany we have a saying," explained Gilles Fralchun, boss of Breton yoghurt company Yaourt Malo. "When we're children we get vaccinated with spokes."

If cycling has a heartland in France, it's Brittany. The region has more race licensees than any other part of France, is home to one of France's biggest one-day races, the GP Plouay, and many a current pro has cut his teeth riding on Brittany's tough semi-professional circuit. Stage eight of this year's Tour was full-fat Breton, beginning in Rennes, the HQ of

Bretagne-Séché Environnement and hometown of their rider Armindo Fonseca.

"Champions like Bernard Hinault and Louison Bobet are from Brittany," said Fonseca. "It's the region of cycling."

The Bretagne team bus was a hub of activity ahead of the stage. 'Salt of the earth' Breton men planted kisses on each other's cheeks while families and friends of local riders huddled around. It was convivial, laid-back and most unlike the pandemonium around the big teams.



**Different teams,
same passion**

"This is their big day," said Fralchun, whose yoghurt empire is the team's nutrition partner.

There's a charming old-school feel to Bretagne-Séché. They don't have any blue chip sponsors, rather local food manufacturers and a Breton construction co-op called

'Pigeon Group'. Their riders are passionate and affable, and once racing they gamble and get in breakaways. Some of them are riding this Tour without so much as a bike computer. Then there's Europcar's Pierrick Quémener, who livened up the Tour's opening week by spending 436km in breakaways.

"Every Breton village has a bike race," he says. "When I say that, I mean there's a fair in every village. It's on a Sunday, it's for everybody around, you get the fishermen, the farmers coming, and there is a big dance afterwards.

"I don't live in Brittany any more. But it's where I'm from and I always love coming back here."

ON THE PODIUM



Chris Froome
Team Sky



Peter Sagan
Tinkoff-Saxo



Daniel Teklehaimanot
MTN-Qhubeka



Peter Sagan
(worn by
Warren Barguil)

RESULTS

1. Alexis Vuillermoz (Fra) Ag2r La Mondiale in 4:20.55

2. Dan Martin (Irl) Cannondale-Garmin at 0.05
3. Alejandro Valverde (Esp) Movistar at 0.10
4. Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo
5. Tony Gallopin (Fra) Lotto-Soudal
6. Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC Racing Team
7. Adam Yates (GBr) Orica-GreenEdge
8. Chris Froome (GBr) Team Sky
9. Bauke Mollema (Ned) Trek Factory Racing
10. Tejay van Garderen (USA) BMC Racing Team all at same time
- Others** 14. Alberto Contador (Esp) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.10; 17. Nairo Quintana (Col) Movistar at 0.10; 30. Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana at 0.20.

Overall classification after stage eight

1. Chris Froome (GBr) Team Sky in 31:01.56

2. Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.11
3. Tejay van Garderen (USA) BMC Racing Team at 0.13
4. Tony Gallopin (Fra) Lotto-Soudal at 0.26
5. Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC Racing Team at 0.28
6. Rigoberto Uran (Col) Etixx-Quick Step at 0.34
7. Albert Contador (Esp) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.36
8. Warren Barguil (Fra) Giant-Alpecin at 1.07
9. Zdenek Stybar (Cze) Etixx-Quick Step at 1.15
10. Bauke Mollema (Ned) Trek Factory Racing at 1.32
- Others** 13. Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana at 1.48; 15. Geraint Thomas (GBr) Team Sky at 1.52; 16. Nairo Quintana (Col) Movistar at 1.56.

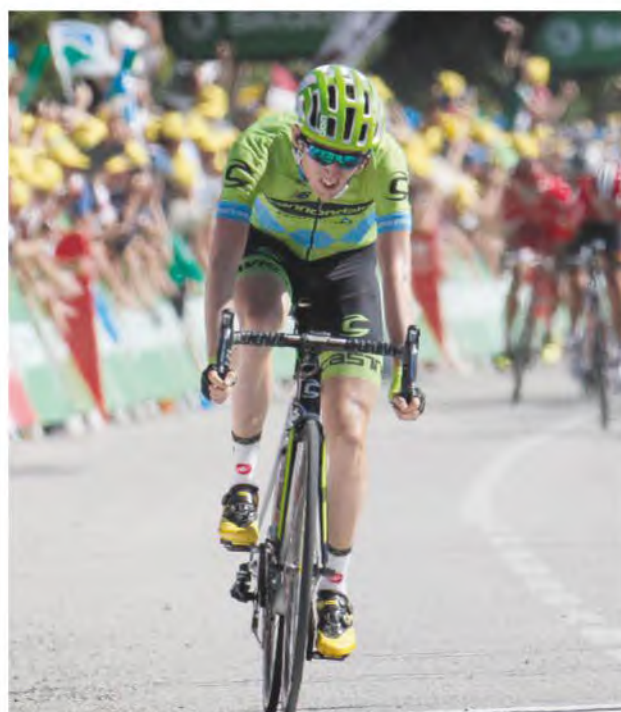
Stage 8 in pictures





Left: Daniele Bennati happily takes a bidon from Rafal Majka and his magic waistcoat

Below: Ireland's Dan Martin came close but left it too late, finishing second just five seconds behind stage winner, Alexis Vuillermoz



Main: German superfan, Dieter 'Didi' Senft makes an appearance — much to Michael Schär's apparent delight

Bottom: Breton fans show their allegiance to the flag — and their unwavering love of beer
Far right: Peter Sagan partakes in a little Slovak folk dancing having learned of his new status as points leader

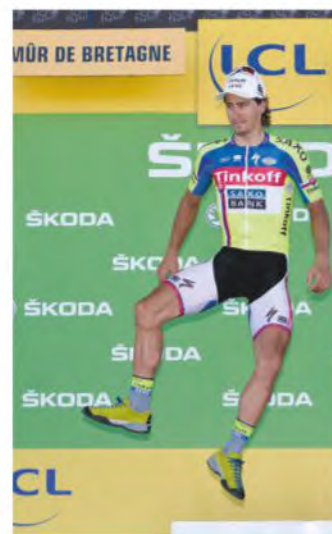


Photo: Belga/Press Association Images, Cor Vos, Graham Watson, Lionel Bonaventure/AFP/Getty Images.

Stage 9

Vannes > Plumelec, 28km

Sunday July 12

Down to the wire

Less than a second splits BMC and Sky

Sophie Hurcom

BMC narrowly edged victory over Sky in the team time trial, beating the men in blue and black by just one second. With the first rest day looming, the result meant that Chris Froome stayed in yellow ahead of the move to the Pyrenees.

One second — that's as close as it gets.

It was actually less than a

second — 0.6 seconds to be precise — separating the two teams on the course into Plumelec but rules dictate that it's rounded up. The last two teams off the start ramp, there was nothing between them over the 28 kilometres.

Where did the result get decided?

It was the final 1.7km Côte de Cadoudal climb that proved key. Both teams finished with five men — but it was the world team time trial champions led by Tejay van Garderen who put their noses in front, with the win moving the American up to second in the overall standings.

Does this make van Garderen a serious contender?

Quite possibly. Van Garderen said his team had “passed every test with flying colours” in the first week, “and it's given me a lot of morale going into the mountains.” Movistar finished third, four seconds down on BMC.

However, Alberto Contador and Vincenzo Nibali conceded another 27 and 34 seconds respectively.

What happened to Orica, they love a TTT?

They finished five minutes down. The Aussie squad has had a tough week with only six of their nine riders still in the race, and one of those only just, as Michael Matthews fractured his ribs on stage three.

STAGE INFO

WEATHER Dry, sunny
TERRAIN Rolling



RESULTS

1. BMC Racing Team in 32.15

2. Team Sky at 0.01
3. Movistar at 0.04
4. Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.28
5. Astana at 0.35
6. IAM Cycling at 0.38
7. Etixx-Quick Step at 0.45
8. Lampre-Merida at 0.48
9. LottoNL-Jumbo at 1.14
10. Ag2r La Mondiale at 1.24

Overall classification after stage nine

1. Chris Froome (GBR) Team Sky in 31:34.12

2. Tejay van Garderen (USA) BMC Racing at 0.12
3. Greg Van Avermaet (Bel) BMC Racing at 0.27
4. Peter Sagan (Svk) Tinkoff-Saxo at 0.38
5. Alberto Contador (Esp) Tinkoff-Saxo at 1.03
6. Rigoberto Uran (Col) Etixx-Quick Step at 1.18
7. Alejandro Valverde (Spa) Movistar at 1.50
8. Geraint Thomas (GBR) Team Sky at 1.52
9. Nairo Quintana (Col) Movistar at 1.59
10. Zdenek Stybar (Cze) Etixx-Quick Step at 1.59
- Others 13. Vincenzo Nibali (Ita) Astana at 2.22; 14. Warren Barguil (Fra) Giant-Alpecin at 2.43; 17. Jean-Christophe Péraud (Fra) Ag2r La Mondiale at 3.30; 19. Andrew Talansky (USA) Cannondale-Garmin at 4.17; 21. Romain Bardet (Fra) Ag2r La Mondiale at 4.38; 29. Thibaut Pinot (Fra) FDJ at 8.05.





Full steam ahead:
the BMC train

SYNCHRONISED SUFFERING

Gruelling stage reshapes the GC

Richard Abraham

Team time trials are tricky at the best of times. Place them after nine days of flat-out racing and chuck in a nasty little finishing climb, and a 28km ride can become one of the hardest in the whole Tour.



Orica operated
with a skeleton crew

"That was a brutal team time trial; after five kilometres it was absolute agony," said Team Sky's Richie Porte. "It's horrible, a massive threshold effort and then you're trying to hold on to Chris Froome's wheel, which is not easy."

Sky's narrow vanquishers BMC might be world champions in the discipline but they didn't have a much nicer time of things over the rolling course either. Rohan Dennis, winner of stage one, described it as the most painful team time trial he'd done with the team. "It hurt," he said.

With a team's time taken on the fifth rider to finish, GC favourites or strong rouleurs couldn't just blast to the line and look after their own interests.

"It was very hard to feel the strengths of the other riders in the team," said Astana's Lieuwe Westra. "But it's very easy to communicate — it's screaming, basically."

"It was a very tough one to pace," added Tinkoff-Saxo's Mick Rogers. "Having the timing to have five riders on that final climb wasn't easy, and you also need a back-up rider just in case someone has a mechanical."

The final Côte de Cadoudal was so full of noisy fans that riders like Sylvain Chavanel (IAM Cycling) couldn't hear any instructions through their radios. Riders practise team time trials relatively rarely, and the through-and-off efforts don't automatically suit diesel engines who are good solo against the clock. The 2013 Tour TTT winners Orica-GreenEdge finished dead last, 4.58 down, with their remaining six rolling along at a gentle pace to keep Michael Matthews in the race.

"We didn't go full gas," said Britain's Simon Yates. "We had to make sure that Bling [Matthews] got through, he's still carrying his injuries. When you're not going full gas you can look around and see how everyone's going."

ON THE PODIUM



Chris Froome
Team Sky



Peter Sagan
Tinkoff-Saxo



Daniel
Teklehaimanot
MTN-Qhubeka



Peter Sagan
(Worn by
Nairo Quintana)

Stage 9 in pictures





Clockwise from top left: Chris Froome shepherds his troops during a first-class team trial performance; LottoNL-Jumbo, 16th out of 17 in the WorldTour rankings, held on for ninth place; Nairo Quintana only lost a handful of seconds; the boys in black, Team Bora-Argon 18, prepare to enter the fray; Bretagne-Séché Environnement begin their foray to the backdrop of Vannes' atmospheric architecture



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Will wider rims make you quicker?

As the trend for fatter tyres continues apace, *Marc Abbott* considers whether wider rims can give you the edge in your next event

With 25mm tyres fast becoming the standard for even WorldTour race teams, it stands to reason that wheel manufacturers will catch up, creating rims with an internal diameter upwards of 17mm to get the best performance from this new generation of tyres. But what benefit will we feel from a wider rim on our next sportive, road race or time trial? Is a wider rim purely for the pros? In short, is the investment going to pay dividends in our day-to-day riding?

Simon Smart, aerodynamicist and designer of Enve's SES wheel system, is clear on the matter. "It's counter-intuitive because you'd think that a narrower rim and tyre are faster," he says. "Five years ago, there were a lot of deep-section rims around, but the big problem with them is that they're very unstable in the wind. When I first started designing wheels for Enve, we

went wider because with a fatter tyre you can get more camber into the wheel, therefore making it more stable."

But will a wider rim diameter help you cut through the air more efficiently? Yes, says Smart: "From an aerodynamics perspective, the reason for going wider, especially on the front, is that you can now run a deeper rim because the airflow stays attached. We're trying to control the flow around the rim so it doesn't detach from it in a crosswind."

Broad front

To our knowledge, Enve is the only manufacturer building wheelsets with the front rim wider than the rear (18.5mm front, 17mm rear). Smart explains why: "There's no drag penalty in going wider on the front because the rim and tyre are in front of the frame. The rear doesn't need to be as wide because it's in what we call a different 'flow condition'."

Wider rims: stiffer, faster and more comfortable

The additional good news is that a wider rim could improve the quality of any ride. Jonathan Day, owner of Strada Wheels, constructs wheels for a living, and believes the greatest benefit is that of increased comfort: "A wider rim increases the volume of air inside a tyre. If you look at a cross-section, an old-school system would look like a mushroom with the sidewall of the tyre flaring out. The new wider systems look

Yes



Simon Smart

Former F1 aerodynamicist and founder of Smart Aero Technology

"Beyond improving the stability of a

wheel, the great win/win is that wider rims and tyres are faster. Five or six years ago the norm was a 21mm tyre; now people are riding a 23 or 25mm. They're more comfortable to ride, and they have lower rolling resistance. Coupled with better stability, going wider on the rim is one of the biggest and best upgrades you can make to your bike that you'll feel, notice and appreciate."

No



Jonathan Day

Owner and director of Strada Wheels

"Run with a 25c tyre at the right pressure, there's a noticeable difference in comfort,

but it's definitely more of a comfort gain than a performance gain. We always recommend a pressure setting for our customers, usually based on their weight, as a starting point. It's not really giving a better contact patch or better grip. The patch changes slightly, but I never sell wider rims on an improvement in speed, only on an improvement in comfort — although there's certainly no loss in speed."



more like an upside-down capital 'U'. It's a small increase in air volume, but we do tend to see an advantage when a wider rim is combined with a wider tyre with a higher threads-per-inch count."

Smart adds: "Wider widths have helped transform the feel of a wheel over the last few years. The ride quality is better; there's better handling and more lateral stiffness. The limitation now is waiting for frame manufacturers to increase the clearance for ever-wider rims and tyres."

Day thinks this added comfort has a knock-on effect on performance: "You might actually go faster because you feel more comfortable. Even for WorldTour teams, the riders are putting in miles of training on a wider rim, and over a three-week race they're feeling more comfortable at the end of each stage."

You might think a wider rim makes for a heavier wheel. However, it depends on the material, says Smart. "When you're

working with carbon-fibre you can play about with the laminate," he says. "There's scope to make a wider rim and take some thickness out of the material, so you're not necessarily ending up with a heavier wheel. Obviously this is a little harder to achieve with aluminium rims, though."

OUR TAKE

More aerodynamic? Check. Better rider comfort? Check. Little weight disadvantage? Check. To our mind, all that remains is for you to decide if you've the money for new wheels. What we can say with certainty is the best way to future-proof your riding is to go wide with your next wheelset, whether alloy or carbon, regardless of whether you're a racer or an all-day epic kind of rider.

HOT STUFF



Lazer Z1 + Aeroshell

Flash orange seems an appropriate colour for Lazer's Z1 helmet, which we've seen adorn the riders of the Madison-Genesis team during the Tour Series this year. Updated with a new 'rear spoiler' and still available with the Aeroshell option, the Z1 scores highly for its versatility.

Contact: www.madison.co.uk

Price: £199.99 Report: August

SiS Go Electrolyte Gel

Cyclists often overlook hydration and while we usually get enough carbohydrates during our ride, the likes of sodium, potassium and magnesium, lost through sweat, aren't replenished. SiS aims to solve this with its new Go Energy + Electrolyte gel, which is said to provide 22g of carbohydrates, as well as 118mg of sodium, 9.5 potassium and 1.5mg magnesium per gel.

Contact: www.scienceinsport.com

Price: £1.50 Report: August



Muc-Off Fabric Protect

It's inevitable that you'll encounter damp conditions out on the road and you can bet it'll be the day you take the whitest of white socks and shoes out. However, if it is looking iffy outside you can use Muc-Off's new Fabric Protect that claims to repel water and general grime, helping to keep your best kit like new.

Contact: www.muc-off.com

Price: £10

Report: September



Astute Sella Skycarb VT saddle £360

Saddle choice is important and your purchase should be largely down to your needs, on the basis that your bike is set up correctly. If spending £360 on one, you'd at least need to know it was the right saddle for you. Astute, a relatively unknown brand in the UK, is said to be performance-led without compromising on comfort, especially

with the Skycarb VT saddle. The ergonomic design (U-Open shape) lowers the centre pressure point, allowing for more padding, which is most noticeable at the nose of the saddle. Comfort and performance, in terms of weight, certainly ring true, but the curved shape didn't suit me, as I favour flatter saddles, though Astute says more designs will be launched later this year. *Symon Lewis*

147g

www.saddleback.co.uk

7



Astutely designed and made for very low weight



Ritchey Zeta II tubeless-ready wheelset £655

The Ritchey Zeta II wheelset looks solid and reliable. The combination of Ritchey's Phantom Flange Hub and the DT bladed spokes provide an aero appearance. As is becoming popular, the wheels have wide rims (17mm internal width). Installing the tubeless tyres was simple; they rolled well from the start, and performed admirably. They felt like they maintained speed well for a wheel that has a relatively shallow rim and the overall low weight helped them feel zippy. In addition, they were robust and dealt well with country-lane potholes. If you are looking for solid, reliable wheels within a budget, you could do a lot worse than the Zeta II. *Chris Hovenden* **1,444g pair**

www.paligap.cc



8

Evoc Terminal bag £179.95

Product of the week

If you long to travel in ease and style, look

no further than the travel range from Evoc. Anything from wash bags, bike bags and 125-litre traveller bags are available, which are all well thought out. Our Terminal Travel bag is not only a good flying companion but also a decent race-day kit bag too. Its main USP is the detachable rucksack — you get two bags in one, allowing you to leave the bulkier roller at the hotel.

Skateboard-style wheels are strong and should shrug off most impacts, zips and tag are robust, and there's been no trouble taking this bag on as hand luggage. *Symon Lewis* **3.9kg** www.silverfish-uk.com



10



Rapha Brevet jersey £130

The Brevet is an impressive marriage of form and function for long-distance Audax events. It has a brevet card pocket on the chest and white hoops that are highly reflective, a refreshing feature, and great when light levels diminish. There is plenty of storage, but when the zipped pocket on the back is full, it can limit what goes into the pocket directly behind it. Featuring Merino wool, the Brevet is really comfortable against the skin. For long rides in the mild climates, this is ideal. *Oliver Bridgewood* **150g (size S)**

www.rapha.cc

9

Schwalbe One tubeless tyres £56.99 each

Save for the recently released Pro One, the original Schwalbe One tubeless tyre is said to be Schwalbe's fastest tyre. Installing the tyres (including inserting the sealant) was straightforward and they stayed inflated without any noticeable seepage for days. In fact, they have retained their pressure impressively throughout testing, which might be down to the good interface between the test wheelset (Ritchey Zeta II). Riding with the Schwalbe One has been smooth and puncture-free. That said, my rides have been (fortunately) dry, and I did notice a deep cut, having ridden through some substantial debris on country roads. Overall, the Schwalbe Ones roll well and give good traction without feeling sluggish. *Chris Hovenden* **340g each**

www.schwalbe.co.uk

8



TomTom Multi Sport Cardio GPS watch £209.99

The TomTom's cycling mode offers the main functions you would expect, including GPS, speed, unit, heart rate, and supporting software. The key feature of this watch is an integrated heart-rate monitor, which monitors your heart beat from the wrist using an optical LED, removing the need for chest straps. The unusual shape of this watch made it a little uncomfortable and ungainly on my wrist, and it was hard to forget I was wearing it. Navigating the menus is a little clunkier than other smartwatches and devices, but didn't take long to get the knack of. There is room for improvement with regard to battery life and the supporting software, but it is competitively priced. *Oliver Bridgewood* **63g**

www.tomtom.com



7



Radial Grippy bar tape £9.99

At £10 for a roll, most would consider this bar tape cheap and cheerful; at this price, you'd stick it on your winter or 'cross bike and not worry if it needed replacing. However, the amazing Grippy tape from Radial has a place on my best bike too. Applying it is a doddle, made easy by the stretchy PU base, which allowed me to adjust the thickness without the concern of tearing the tape. Grip in the wet is good, with the textured surface, but this hasn't been to the detriment of durability, with the tape showing limited wear over a good month's use. We'd like to see a few more colour options, since only three are available currently. *Symon Lewis* **40g per roll**

www.radialcycles.co.uk

9

LONG TERM TEST

Four months later

Mavic CRX Ultimate helmet £150

Although lightweight and well vented, the Mavic CRX has been a struggle to live with. The round nature of the helmet doesn't really suit my head shape and I found it more often than not uncomfortable. I never forget the helmet is there, which knocks it down a mark. *SL*

www.mavic.co.uk

7



Round shape has proved uncomfortable

Can't live without

WD-40 400ml £4.99

An absolute essential in the maintenance shed of any cyclist, WD-40 has so many uses, even ones it is not specifically designed for. It can be used as makeshift degreaser on your drivetrain, if you have run out of your dedicated product post-cleaning. *OB*

www.raleigh.co.uk



WD-40: it's still indispensable

Kuota Kryon

£2,185 ^{£1,099} (frameset only)

Tested by: Oliver Bridgewood | Miles ridden: 252 |
Size tested: Large | Weight: 8.1kg/17.8lb

When compared to the likes of Bianchi and Pinarello, Kuota is a brand that doesn't have huge recognition in the UK, so consequently you could be forgiven for not knowing it is Italian. Its bikes are used by the Androni Giocattoli Pro Continental team and previously by Ag2r La Mondiale. Italians are as

much renowned for superb bikes as they are for pasta and espressos, so we were keen to put the Kryon through its paces.

Frame

The Kryon frame is a carbon-fibre monocoque with what Kuota describes as a 'racing geometry'.

In reality, I found the geometry to be more relaxed with regards to the stack and reach than other race bikes — the reach is 380mm, with many racing bikes such as the Merida Reacto or Cannondale SuperSix Evo (in equivalent sizes) typically being around 390mm or 400mm in reach.

A neat feature is the bladed aero seatpost, which is reversible. By reversing the post you can sit further over the bottom bracket, allowing for time trial positions. For those not wanting to buy separate TT and road bikes, this is an attractive alternative.

Kuota has created the Kryon with aerodynamics in mind; the fork and tube shapes are designed to minimise drag, compared with normal round profiles.

For those wanting a future-proof bike, the Kryon frame is Shimano Di2 and Campagnolo EPS compatible, with the seatpost designed for Di2 cigar shaped batteries,



should you wish to upgrade. Other features also include a 386 BB, a 1.5in to 1 1/8in headset, internal cable routing and a very neat integrated aero seat clamp.

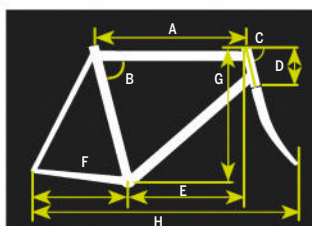
Specification

Unlike other brands, Kuota offers a custom build service to UK customers, where you can specify a choice of groupset and wheel packages to suit your budget. Alternatively, you can purchase the frameset on its own for £1,099.

The rear triangle has been given additional clearance to allow for 25mm tyres, although our test machine was fitted with Mavic 23mm tyres. Our bike also came with Shimano Ultegra 11-speed shifters, derailleurs and chainset. To keep the cost down for the consumer though, brakes are Kuota own brand and the cassette was



Kuota Kryon	
£2,185	
Frame	7/10
Specification	8/10
Ride	6/10
Value	8/10
Distributor	www.dhwagencies.com
Frame	Kryon Carbon
Fork	Carbon
Size range	XXS-XXL
Weight	8.1kg/17.8lb (without pedals)
Groupset	Shimano Ultegra 11-speed
Gear ratios	11-26, 52/36
Wheels	Mavic Cosmic Elite
Tyres	Mavic Yksion 23mm
Bar	Deda RHM 02
Stem	Deda 02
Seatpost	Carbon (reversible)
Saddle	San Marco Aspide



SIZE TESTED: L

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
55cm	73.5"	70"	17cm	38cm	40.6cm	57cm	98.5cm



The Kuota: Italian made and good value



Neat internal cables used

The Kuota Krypton is responsive in the corners thanks in part to a nippy 985mm wheelbase. However, acceleration out of the corners is less exuberant. I found the bike to be slightly dull in this regard. At 8.1kg it is not the lightest and this is certainly a factor here.

Kuota's own brand brakes felt a little muffled when compared to the superb Shimano Ultegra calipers. It is hard to complain at their absence considering the overall price, but Ultegra brakes offer superior performance.

I was not bowled over by the compliance and comfort offered by the Krypton. A trend emerging with the next generation of aero bikes is

increased comfort, but the Krypton seems a little behind the curve, with the ride feeling a little harsh.

Value

At £2,185 for the complete bike, our test model does well on value.

Other options around the £2,000 price mark include the BMC TeamMachine SLR02 and Scott Addict 30, both of which feature Shimano 105 groupsets, not the higher spec Ultegra you see here. Not only that, the wheels on both of those bikes are inferior to the Mavic Cosmics that come on the Kuota too.

Italian bikes may be renowned for being expensive, but the Kuota Krypton bucks that trend.

Shimano 105. Mavic Cosmic Elite wheels are a solid and reliable choice, if a little heavy. For training they are perfect, but ultimately to get

the most out of the bike, you would be advised to upgrade in this area first.

Aside from the budget brake calipers, all the parts are great quality. The bike is finished with a San Marco saddle and Deda bars and stem.

Riding

When you first jump on aero bikes they often just feel faster, and that is for good reason. They are! Although the Krypton is in aero bike territory, with its tube profiles and seatpost, it doesn't have the same wind-cheating feel that you get aboard a Canyon Aerod or Cervélo S5.



Kuota's reversible seatpost

Verdict

The Krypton is a good bike and is well made with neat lines and internal cable routing. But it just didn't excite me.

You can climb aboard a similarly priced Scott Addict 30 and instantly appreciate the stiff bottom bracket and lively handling. The reversible seatpost is a useful feature and the spec is great for the price. As is the case with many bikes, to fully realise the Krypton's potential you should upgrade the wheels.

For

- You can customise the spec
- Aero frame
- Reversible seatpost

Against

- Heavy wheels
- Not the most compliant
- Reach is quite short
- Own brand brakes

7

Lightweight jerseys

group test

Oliver Bridgewood
puts five summer jerseys to the test

What?

A lightweight jersey is an ideal garment for the summer months, not only helping to keep you cool, but also keeping the weight weenies satisfied when tackling the climbs. As the name suggests a lightweight garment should weigh south of 150g, be as breathable as possible, while still being able to wick sweat away efficiently.

Why?

The recent heatwave is a good reason to buy a lightweight jersey, as with these garments breathability is key. With many of us opting for our best kit at this time of year, it makes sense to top that off with a weight-saving jersey that'll help keep us cool and won't leave us in a sweaty, drenched mess either.

How?

We put these jerseys to the test on some of the most testing roads Europe has to offer. Climbs including the Col de la Madone and the fearsome Kitzbüheler Horn were scaled while wearing these jerseys, often in searing temperatures at or above 30°C. All the jerseys were weighed on the CW scales, and as a frame of reference for fit, our tester was 6ft 1in and 69kg.

HOW WE SCORE

- 10 - Superb, best in its class and we couldn't fault it.
- 9 - Excellent, a slight change and it would be perfect
- 8 - Brilliant, we'd happily buy it
- 7 - Solid, but there's better out there
- 6 - Pretty good, but not quite hitting the mark
- 5 - Okay, nothing wrong with it, but nothing special
- 4 - A few niggles let this down
- 3 - Disappointing
- 2 - Poor, approach with caution
- 1 - Terrible, do not buy this product

Rapha Pro Team Climber's jersey £130

You may remember seeing pictures of a sun-burnt Chris Froome after wearing a lightweight mesh Rapha jersey last year. Fortunately, for 2015 Rapha has updated its Climber's Jersey, with the main panels now made from an eyelet based mesh, which retains very high levels of breathability, but offers superior fit and sun protection to an open mesh. Available in black, white and coral, the jersey features the iconic Rapha armband and bars on the right rear pocket.

Subtle hi-vis on the rear is an added boon, inspiring confidence in tunnels and low light.

As part of the Pro Team line, fit is good, with the tailoring more suited to a cyclist's build. A size medium fitted well. The pockets are held in place by two reinforced lines that run up the back, which does a great job of preventing the pockets stretching and sagging when full.

The jersey proved excellent in testing 30°C conditions. And though the price may make you sweat, fear not, the wicking is superb. A beautiful jersey, that is highly functional.

Weight
116
grams

9

Sizes: XS-XXL
Colours: white, black, coral pink
www.rapha.cc

Endura Fs260-Pro SL jersey £64.99

The Endura FS260-Pro SL jersey may not have the most imaginative name, but don't let that put you off. The Scottish company is quickly garnering a reputation for professional quality products at very competitive prices. This is in part down to Endura's ongoing partnership with the Movistar Pro Team.

Simply put, at £64.99, this jersey is superb. The fit around the arms is excellent, with the silicone grippers doing a very good job of holding things in place. The fit across the shoulders and chest is very good too. The pockets are the perfect size, and can be packed with plenty of ride essentials, and wicking is right up there with the best.

The only gripe is the three-quarter length zip. My suspicion is that this has been done for fit purposes, as a three-quarter zip can help secure pockets and minimize bunching on the chest and tummy. In this regard it succeeds, as the fit is great, but when it gets really hot a full-length zip is desirable.

Weight
93
grams

9

Sizes: S-XXL
Colours: black or red
www.endura.co.uk



Pearl Izumi Elite Ltd jersey £69.99

It maybe the heaviest on test, but ventilation on this jersey is good thanks in part to strategically placed Direct-Vent panels. The textiles do wick sweat, but I was not a fan of the way they felt against my skin. In comparison, the material used in the Rapha, Sportful and Endura offerings felt much smoother to the touch.

With regard to fit, the Elite Ltd jersey sized large around the torso, but the sleeves were fairly short. The elasticated sleeves are inferior in quality to the laser-cut and close-fitting sleeves on the Endura Fs260-Pro SL.

Available in several different colours, there is plenty of choice for you to coordinate the Elite Ltd with existing kit and durability is good too, with the garment standing up well to washing. The three pockets are a good size, with the outer pockets ergonomically tapered for easy access.

Sun protection where this jersey scores highly, with a UPF rating of 40. By comparison, the Endura has a UPF rating of 25. A solid and durable jersey, but it loses marks on comfort.

Weight
156
grams

6

Sizes: S-XXL

Colours: several options — see website
www.madison.co.uk

Sportful R&D Ultralight jersey £85

As used by Tinkoff-Saxo in the mountains of the Tour de France, the Sportful R&D Ultralight jersey is excellent. The dense mesh that makes up much of the main body of the jersey provides good relief from hot weather, but is also not so permeable that it becomes too cool for 99 per cent of British days. The full-length zip also helps to push it ahead of the Endura jersey in the scoring.

Most impressive about the Sportful Ultralight jersey is the pretty much perfect fit. The ergonomic cut is excellent with no excess material flapping in the wind, and the raw cut on the sleeves gives a great finish, with a snug fit around the arms.

Unlike the Adidas jersey, this option comes with good-sized pockets, which also manage to keep their shape despite the lightweight construction.

Finally, the large range of sizes should make it easy to find the perfect fit, although as with most Sportful products, this jersey comes up small.

Weight
115
grams

10

Sizes: XS-3XL

Colours: blue, black
www.c3products.com

Adidas Adizero jersey £90

Logic would dictate that the Adidas Adizero jersey would walk away with a lightweight jersey test. At just 65g, this featherweight option is the lightest jersey that money can buy, meaning that you can barely notice it out on the road. Aside from the low weight, this is also down to the excellent fit, and the level of ventilation was also very good on hot days.

However, the problem with this jersey is that in its pursuit of the being the lightest possible jersey, Adidas seems to have forgotten some of the basics that make a practical garment that you'd be able to use on a day-to-day basis. The main problem is the pockets, or lack thereof. Unlike the other jerseys on test, the Adizero jersey only features two pockets, and even these are far too small. Each one is roughly the size of a smartphone, so once you've got your basic supplies there's little room for other items such as energy bars. What's more the pockets are very short, meaning that my mini-pump even fell out a couple of times when sprinting.

Weight
65
grams

6

Sizes: XS-XL

Colours: black, blue
www.adidasclimbing.com



FITNESS

How do I... Stay hydrated?

What you drink is as important as what you eat when you're on the bike

Laura Tilt

Failure to replace fluid and electrolytes lost in sweat doesn't just make cycling feel harder, it can also affect your motor control and decision making, which can be dangerous on the roads. Dehydration doesn't have to be severe to affect performance; negative effects are measurable when fluid loss is equivalent to a two per cent drop in body weight — that's 1.4 kilos for a 70kg cyclist.

Pre-ride

Start each training session well hydrated. Adopt good fluid habits by drinking a large glass of water on waking and taking regular drink breaks during the day, not just with meals. Use urine colour as a marker of hydration — if yours is dark and strong smelling you probably need to drink up. If it's a short ride or you won't have the chance to drink, have a large glass of water (300-500ml) 15 minutes before you leave.

During

For rides under 40 minutes experts say you don't need to drink anything providing you start well hydrated. For longer rides, little and often is best.

Essential points

- Even mild dehydration affects performance.
- Start well hydrated and drink regularly.
- Electrolytes lost in sweat need to be accounted for.

Next is what to put in your bottle. For rides under an hour, water is fine. Over an hour, an isotonic drink with four to eight per cent carbohydrate is recommended. This replaces carbs and fluid in one, and your body holds on to more fluid from an isotonic solution than water.

When riding for two hours plus, your drink should contain sodium. "You lose both fluid and salts in sweat, so replacing each of them is key," says Emma Barraclough, senior sports nutritionist at SiS nutrition. "If you just drink pure water you will dilute your body's sodium concentration. This stimulates your kidneys to produce more urine, meaning that you end up losing the fluid that you were trying to replace." Isotonic drinks contain sodium, but you can also add electrolyte tabs to water.

Post-ride

The aim is to replace any fluid deficits. If you started at 70kg and ended at 69kg you'd be left with a 1kg or a one-litre deficit — consuming 125 per cent of this will allow for what is lost in urine production. Recovery drinks, fruit juice, milk, smoothies and fluids from soup and yoghurt can help restore the balance.

DO start each ride well hydrated — cyclists who are dehydrated report increased sensations of fatigue, pain and heat compared to well-hydrated counterparts.

DON'T drink more than is comfortable — problems with over-hydration arise when more fluid is consumed than is lost in sweat. Listen to your body and drink at a comfortable, natural rate.

DO consider calculating sweat losses to help establish how much you need to drink. Weigh yourself before and after a ride barefoot and in dry underwear. Subtract your post-ride from pre-ride weight and add on fluid consumed during exercise to establish total fluid loss (NB 1kg is equal to one litre).

YOU SAY

For shortish rides, just water. Longer rides and hot days call for hydration tablets.

Liz Almond

If riding for 1-2 hours, I use water and hydro tabs. If riding for two hours plus Skratch Labs hydration and energy drink.

Dave Ody



DON'T rely on plain water in rides lasting longer than an hour — sodium also needs to be replaced. Use an isotonic drink or add electrolyte tabs to your water bottle.

DO take advantage of being able to drink on the bike during longer rides — pack enough fluids in your bike cages before you go and adopt a little and often drinking pattern of around 150-200ml every 15-20 minutes.

It might sound silly but I prefer clear bottles. Reminds me to drink if I see that the fluid level isn't going down.

Mark Roberts

I force myself to take a sip of my drink every 10 minutes, especially if I'm doing a tough training session.

Claire Roberts

Isotonic drinks might have better nutritional content, but nothing beats a cold slurp of water.

Alex Steadman

I have a glass of milk before and after my ride.

Rich Holdgate

Things to do this week

Try a pumpkin seed 9bar

The sickly sweet taste of an energy gel on your training ride can become monotonous — so something that tastes more natural can be very welcome. 9bar's pumpkin seed bar fits the bill and is packed full of seeds and goodness. Despite looking a little dry, each bar contains no fewer than five different types of seeds and tastes fantastic. Combined with its high carbohydrate and protein content, it is a great way to add a little variety to a repetitive training diet.

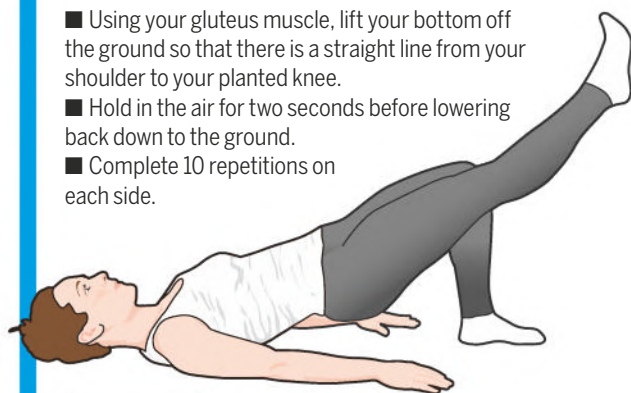
£10.80 for box of 16 bars www.9bar.com



Single leg-bridge

It is important to keep your large muscles strong off the bike as well as on it. This exercise not only does that, but also resembles the single leg contractions that occur when out on the road.

- Lie on your back with your arms by your side and both knees bent in the starting sit-up position.
- Raise one leg up, maintaining a 90-degree bend in the knee.
- Using your gluteus muscle, lift your bottom off the ground so that there is a straight line from your shoulder to your planted knee.
- Hold in the air for two seconds before lowering back down to the ground.
- Complete 10 repetitions on each side.



Green tea

Despite being used in Chinese medicines for years, it looks like green tea is about to break into the mainstream as the latest must-have nutritious drink. It contains more antioxidants than other teas and has also been shown to lower cholesterol. Despite losing some of its health benefits, it can also be consumed cold on hot days to fight against pollen allergies that come to the fore during the summer.



The team behind the teams

The Tour de France is an incredible, spectacular exercise in logistics. And for every rider that takes to the start line of each stage, behind the scenes there's a team of people working day and night to get them there

Simon Schofield

The Tour de France is the biggest mobile sporting event in the world; within sport it has no comparison. Perhaps the closest parallel is a tour by a giant rock band like the Rolling Stones, but with close to 200 performers, rather than four. Every day, an army of broadcasters, press, hospitality crews and, of course, the publicity caravan, descend on a town before planting down for the stage. They then repeat the process the following

day by uprooting and settling many miles away. It's little short of a miracle.

The professional peloton is supported by its own throng of helpers. These include the well recognised roles of sports directors, mechanics and soigneurs. But what about the numerous backroom staff who each have a vital role to play? Without these unsung stars it couldn't happen. They are the team within a team, the supporting actors. If they falter, the stars of the show can't perform and the enormous edifice would be worthless; like a gigantic, crazy *Hamlet* with no prince.

We spoke to some of the key people who help get the riders to the start line each day and then keep them fit, fuelled, healthy and in the best possible shape to complete the world's toughest endurance event.

The sleep team

Alongside the more traditional roles of soigneur (or carer), and chef, the 'sleep team' is emerging as the Next Big Thing at Le Tour, as the focus on rider wellbeing increases in momentum. The recent controversy over Team Sky's proposed



use of motorhomes at races only serves to highlight how big this subject is becoming.

The trend started when Team Sky began taking their own bedding to hotels during races for their riders to sleep on. As the accommodation on Grand Tours is booked, and paid for, by the race organisers, a common gripe from teams is that it's not always as conducive to effective recovery as it could be.

Nick Littlehales of sportsleepcoach.co.uk was drafted in to compile a sleep profile of each Sky rider. "You analyse what they do and look at how it can be improved," says Littlehales. The aim is for riders to get at least eight hours of comfortable, restful sleep with consistent sleeping and waking times.

"The key word here is 'familiarisation'," Littlehales explains. It's a simple idea and can perhaps best be summed up by the phrase 'there's nothing quite like your own bed'. Riders' habits, preferences and home environments were analysed. The good bits (like consistent sleep/wake times and eight hours' duration) were retained, the bad bits were discouraged, and products were introduced that could be used at home and transported to races. These included particle air filters, specialist mattress toppers and pillows.

Technogel is the Italian company supplying the toppers and pillows to Sky.

"The products have a gel layer which is soft and has the properties of liquid, but in a solid form," explains product manager Nicola Faccini.

"It's very high density and it draws heat out of the rider's body and then regulates it at 1.5°C lower than normal body temperature. This is the best temperature to encourage deep sleep."

If you want to sleep like a Sky rider, you'll need to dig deep. The widest mattress topper will set you back 940 euros (around £675) but Faccini says that more and more

pro cyclists, and some amateurs, are demanding the specialist products: "It's becoming evident that sleep is the third pillar of health, after diet and activity."

A good night's rest is so vital at a Grand Tour that Sky tried to take the science of sleep to a new level at the 2015 Tour, by attempting to take its riders out of the potentially grotty hotels altogether and investing in luxury motorhomes — Richie Porte used one at the Giro d'Italia. However, the UCI intervened and put a halt on Sky using them at the Tour by introducing a rule that all members of teams must sleep in hotels provided by the organisers to ensure a level playing field for everyone.

"I'm not surprised they tried," says Littlehales. "They can control the whole environment and maximise it for optimum recovery. Chris Froome would have known what he was getting, night after night after night, whether at the top of a mountain or in the centre of a city."

"Sleep, in itself, is not a performance criterion, but recovery is and consistent sleep helps recovery."

It is a measure, perhaps, of the importance of sleep and recovery that the UCI has seen fit to rule over exactly where teams rest their heads.

The logistics supremo

Barbara van Maeldergem, the logistics manager for Trek Factory Racing, exudes calm. Which is helpful because she is responsible for making sure that the riders and team staff get to the start line,

and make any long transfers during the race. She also has to deal with all the rider registrations and paperwork for the race, as well as organise all pre-race training camps.

"I probably book around 800 flights a year," says van Maeldergem. "So after

nine years in the job I have a good routine. The Tour is like any other race, just a bit bigger."

Her biggest challenges are last-minute changes to the team line-up. "You are never quite sure about team selection for a race, and then if a rider

crashes or gets sick you might have to change a whole lot of flight schedules to make sure that all the riders arrive at roughly the same time," she says.

Pro bike riders, on the whole, are good travellers, van Maeldergem says. "They don't complain that much," she smiles. "They are very understanding when things change. Sometimes they will make special requests about times or airlines and if I can do it, I will. But if I can't, they are understanding."

Only one rider during her tenure has missed a flight. And then he missed two in a row! "I can't tell you his name

"Sleep, in itself is not a performance criterion, but recovery is and consistent sleep helps recovery."
Nick Littlehales,
sportsleepcoach.co.uk



Flight transfers within the race have to be meticulously planned

— you would know it, but it's not fair because normally he is very organised!"

Van Maeldergem has recently caught the cycling bug and has been given a high-end Trek, her first proper bike. "Now I have to get in shape," she says. She certainly shouldn't be short of people to ask for advice.

The team chef

We asked three team chefs what pro riders crave while riding the Tour. The answers were identical: pizza and burgers, said the chefs for Cannondale-Garmin, LottoNL-Jumbo and Trek Factory Racing.

Needless to say, those wishes aren't granted every day, although Kim Rokkjaer who keeps the Trek riders fed does permit it the evening before rest days. "I make them healthy homemade hamburgers, with some guacamole and a few French fries," he reveals.

"But I don't have to police the riders. They know the score and they wouldn't take unhealthy food even if I brought it to them."

Sean Fowler, Cannondale-Garmin's chef, also relaxes the rules the night before the final stage in Paris, treating the riders to burgers and sweet treats. Lotto's Jesper Boom does the same. "They can also drink a nice beer with it and not have to think about what's coming and relax a bit," he says.

One thing's for sure, pro bike riders have long memories when it comes to food during a Grand Tour. Fowler recalls one stage in the high mountains when several teams without the services of a chef had been let down by an outside caterer: "In addition to cooking for our team, I cooked risotto Parmigiano and fillet of beef for GreenEdge and for Euskaltel.

"All of those riders still remember and thank me when they see me."

Most team chefs will order their dried goods ahead of time, but they will shop for fresh meat, fish and vegetables locally on the race. Rokkjaer gets everything from supermarkets: "I use the same supermarket chain so I know the layout of where everything is because it saves time.

"I never buy meat or fish from a market or use a hotel's supplies. In a supermarket I know it is safe and secure from a hygiene point of view, and it can be traced from information on the label. That's important."

Rokkjaer loves the Tour: "I'm so proud

Riders value variety and taste as much as they do nutritional content: team chefs like Kim Rokkjaer have a duty to deliver



to be part of the team,” he says. But he hates the Vuelta. “There are no hygiene rules and I’ve seen filthy kitchens in Spanish hotels.”

Fowler has the same positive feelings about La Grand Boucle: “The best thing about it is sharing the collective energy of the riders and the team.”

The nutrition supplier

With 21 stages over 23 days, it’s vital the riders keep their energy levels high and get nutrition right to last the three weeks.

As such, LottoNL-Jumbo riders will

consume 1,250 energy gels during the Tour, all of which are supplied by British company OTE.

The team is made up of Dutch and Belgian nationalities, and although OTE supplies

a variety of flavours the Dutch riders are pretty much guaranteed to favour one flavour, based on their national colour.

“The Dutch always go for the orange flavour,” laughs OTE co-founder and director, Peter Slater, “whilst the Belgians will go for one of the others. It really makes the soigneurs laugh.”

Lots of cyclists, especially those who’ve ridden long days fuelled on gels, wonder whether Tour riders get fed up with the endless supply of sweet-tasting liquid. But according to Slater, they don’t: “Firstly they generally save the gels for towards the end of the stage and they will eat solid food earlier in the stage.

“But secondly, this generation of riders has grown up with gels. Gels have only been around in their current form around 12 or 15 years, but today’s riders don’t know any different. They know that it is simply part and parcel of being a Tour rider.

“And actually it’s not really the sweetness that’s a problem. Thickness and intensity or acidity is what makes some gels unpalatable and can cause gastro-intestinal distress. Ours are thinner and PH neutral so we never get reports of stomach problems.”

What’s in it, we wonder, for a nutrition supplier, paying to sponsor a team and

providing an awful lot of free product?

“It’s all about credibility and awareness,” says Slater. “Social media traffic increases when our products get seen at the Tour and it’s the pinnacle of physical effort, so having a product that the riders like and use gives you huge credibility.”

And nutritional partnerships can be a little more rewarding than other sponsor relationships. It is far from unknown for some riders to substitute their favourite bits of equipment or clothing instead of using the stuff supplied by sponsors, and try to keep things sweet by taping

over logos or getting things rebadged. That can’t happen with nutritional products.

“Nutrition companies are often small — they’re not giant worldwide conglomerates and we feel valued,” Slater

says. “We know we are helping them do their job and we go to team get-togethers and races to build relationships and trust.

“Actually we don’t get that much feedback from riders but we see that as a good thing because it means they are happy with everything.” ■

Facts and figures

The sheer scale of the Tour is breathtaking, and a glance at the number of people involved in each team gives an idea of how complex and detailed the planning of the whole operation needs to be.

Team personnel

Nine riders

Five soigneurs

Four coaches

Three or four mechanics — this might double if there is a cobbled stage

Two hospitality staff to look after sponsors

Two sports directors

One chef

One doctor

One physio or osteopath

One PR person

One logistics person

Supplies

11 mattresses or toppers and pillows

36 skinsuits, 45 bibshorts, 54 race

jerseys, 250 podium caps

50-60 bikes, five spare frames

140 wheels and 220 tyres

Two gallons of massage cream

50 spare chains

50 sets of bar tape

2,000 water bottles

1,250 gels, 800 energy bars,

250 servings recovery drink

“Gels have only been around in their current form around 12 or 15 years, but today’s riders don’t know any different”
Peter Slater, OTE co-founder and director



Most pro riders will opt for solid foods early on and save gels for the final part of a stage

Mike Northey's Diet in a day



Team-Madison Genesis | Age 28 | From Auckland, New Zealand

Mike Northey is in his second season with Team Madison-Genesis, whom he has helped

reach the top of the Tour Series standings. As well as riding last year's Tour of Britain with the team, he also finished on the

podium at the Lincoln Grand Prix before winning in Beverley. We spoke to him about how he fuels before and after

training rides, as well as how he varies his diet between training and racing.

Breakfast

On a standard training day, I have a big bowl of porridge in the morning with a banana and chia seeds before trying to get out on the road before 10am.

CW says:

Endurance athletes must have breakfast. Porridge is the perfect food to start the day, as it is digested at a slow pace and will help fuel Northey on his morning ride. The addition of a banana boosts the carbohydrate content, giving him more energy without adding fat. Chia seeds may be small and seem insignificant but they are full of antioxidants as well as fibre, which helps prevent illness.

434

Kcalories

80g

Carbohydrates

14.2g

Protein

14.2g

Fat



On the bike

Depending on how far I'm riding, I'll eat anything from a banana to a SiS Go Energy bar or some sort of bread brioche kind of thing. I never train on energy gels, as I always try to eat solid food. I race with gels but I don't find it great to have them all the time. However, I make sure I have an electrolyte drink with an SiS Go Electrolyte tablet.

CW says:

Eating just solid food on a training ride is good to increase glycogen stores for the ride ahead. However, using gels is a convenient way of consuming the same carbohydrate content that solid foods provide. Northey may be missing a trick here. Make sure you test out what works best for you during training.

531

Kcalories

120g

Carbohydrates

9.5g

Protein

1.7g

Fat



After the ride

I try to have a routine of having my recovery shake straight away. This consists of making up a shake with SiS Rego Rapid Recovery or SiS Whey Protein. I may also have coconut water, frozen spinach, chia seeds, a banana and maybe a yoghurt. Then I blend it all up and hold out till dinner.

CW says:

Sticking to a post-ride nutrition regime promotes faster recovery after training. Drinking a recovery shake within 30 minutes of finishing your ride helps the body replenish its carbohydrate and protein stores. Coconut water contains electrolytes that help rehydrate the body. Frozen spinach is convenient and, as it is frozen immediately after being harvested, retains its vitamin C content better than does fresh spinach.

527

Kcalories

85.8g

Carbohydrates

23g

Protein

12.3g

Fat





70
Kcalories
10g
Carbohydrates
0g
Protein
3g
Fat

Dinner

I eat more rice than pasta. If I have pasta more than twice a week, I can kind of feel [negative effects] a little bit. I usually have rice with chicken — pretty standard really, nothing too crazy. I may have fish or steak from time to time but I have chicken mostly. Over the years, you learn what you need and what you don't need. You're always going to have a binge now and then, but it's all fuel, so the better you eat, the better you're going to feel when training the next day.

CW says:

High-protein meats such as chicken, fish or steak are great options that help muscles repair and grow after physical activity. Making sure chicken is skinless helps keep fat levels down. Eating rice or pasta gives the body the necessary glycogen store replenishment. Choosing brown rice adds more fibre and more nutrients compared to white rice.

Snacks

I just drink tea or coffee throughout the day. I try to limit my caffeine if we've been racing, as I don't want to consume too much and be on a caffeine high when I'm trying to relax and wind down after a ride.

CW says:

Being over-reliant on caffeine is best avoided, as you don't want your performance to suffer when caffeine levels in your blood fall. Caffeine can also affect your sleep patterns if taken late in the day or over-consumed.

354
Kcalories
44g
Carbohydrates
31.1g
Protein
5.4g
Fat



Night-time

I don't have a recovery drink before bed. Sometimes I have a glass of red wine if I'm trying to wind down. If I've consumed a lot of caffeine or if I've raced and still have adrenaline pumping round my body, it can be quite hard to shut down when I go to bed.

CW says:

Red wine is a great way to relax and has additional health benefits due to its antioxidant properties. It also contains melatonin, which has been shown to regulate sleep patterns — provided it's consumed in small quantities. Don't take this as an excuse to binge-drink or drink wine every evening, otherwise the negative effects of the alcohol will soon outweigh the potential benefits.

150
Kcalories
4.6g
Carbohydrates
0.1g
Protein
0g
Fat



DAILY INTAKE

2,066
kcalories
344.4g
carbohydrates
77.9g
protein
36.6g
fat



Gift of the gab

Self-belief and self-deception could help unlock untapped reserves, experts suggest

Do you talk to yourself? The reason we ask is because Dr E Randy Eichner considers this in a recent editorial in *Current Sports Medicine Reports* headed Self-Talk, Deception, and Placebo Power in Sports Performance.

Eichner notes that irrespective of whether self-talk can be considered a placebo, a recent study suggests that it can enhance sports performance.

Twenty-four recreational cyclists were randomised into two groups of 12; one group was taught self-talk, e.g. 'you're feeling good', 'keep going', etc, and the other group was not. In a high-intensity, cycling time-to-exhaustion (TTE) test, the self-talk group increased their TTE by 18 per cent. This invites "support for the hypothesis that the point of exhaustion is set not so much by muscle fatigue as by perception of effort".

Start kidding yourself

Deception can also improve performance. For example, nine cyclists undertook four 4km time trials, and their

progress was displayed using an on-screen avatar. The first TT was to get familiarised; the second TT established a baseline. But on the third and the fourth TT, the avatar was either set correctly to reflect the true baseline performance, or set deceptively, increasing the baseline power output to 102 per cent. The 'false avatar' TTs were completed 1.7 per cent faster than the baseline TT and one per cent faster than the 'true avatar' TT. "It was concluded that cyclists hold onto a metabolic reserve even during maximal time trials, and this reserve can be tapped after deception."

But Eichner warns that those of us "determined to give '110 per cent' in a setting where coaches demand '110 per cent' can end up dead".

The influence of the mind on physical performance is undeniable, and can lead to improvements, but coaches and cyclists have a responsibility to establish clear boundaries within which deception and self-talk are consistent with ethical and safe behaviour.

Great for...

post-ride fuelling

Cod and watercress parcels

A light summer dish that will help repair damaged muscle tissue and replenish glycogen levels. Cod is a great source of omega 3 fatty acids, vitamins B12 and B6 and niacin – all extremely good for assisting the heart and blood vessels. It's a perfect post-ride meal.

INGREDIENTS:

- 250g cod fillets (or other sustainable white fish)
- 85g (1 bag) watercress
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled
- 1 green chilli, chopped
- 2 slices of Parma ham
- 2 tbsp of olive oil
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 150g brown rice
- 1 small red onion, diced
- 50g sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
- 50g black olives, stoned and chopped
- black pepper



"Come on, you're the man, you rock!"



Photo: Jesse Wild

NUTRITION PER SERVING:

602

calories

31g

fat

4.9g

sat fat

2g

salt

METHOD:

- 1) Pre-heat the oven to 180°.
- 2) Take the cod and pile a quarter of the watercress along the top of the two fillets (reserving the rest for later) along with the chilli and garlic.
- 3) Carefully wrap the cod and its topping in the slices of Parma ham. Place on a baking tray and sprinkle with the olive oil and balsamic vinegar.
- 4) Bake for 15 minutes or until the cod is cooked through.
- 5) Meanwhile, bring 360ml of water to the boil.
- 6) Add the brown rice, stir and leave to simmer for 15-20 minutes until the water is all absorbed and the rice is cooked. Add the onion, tomato and olives to a hot pan and lightly cook.
- 7) Once the rice is cooked, add to the pan and mix together, adding pepper to taste.
- 8) Spoon some of the brown rice mixture onto a plate. Place the remaining watercress on top. Remove the cod from the oven and place on top.

**Time
taken:
20 mins**

TAKE HOME TRAINING SESSION

The perfect uphill power training

Give your UK sportive performance a lift by stretching yourself with these four-minute hill repeats

This session doesn't just improve your ability to recover after climbing, but also boosts your hill-climbing power. These four-minute climbing periods are perfect practice for UK sportives that prominently feature shorter climbs compared to their European counterparts.

Start off with a 15-minute warm-up that starts gently but progressively increases in intensity and concludes with a zone three effort. The four-minute hill efforts should be tough but

maintainable over the entire four minutes. It is also important not to blow yourself out on the first effort and make sure that your fifth effort is just as strong as the first.

In between these four-minute climbs descend back down the hill and along a flat section of road before starting the hill climb again. Do not attack the descent, as it is crucial to use this four-minute period to recover from the intense effort that occurred when riding up the climb. Complete five sets of hill-climbing and recovery descents before a 15-minute cool down.

**Time
taken:
70 mins**

Time (minutes)	Zone
0-15	1-2-3
15-19	4-5
19-23	2
23-27	4-5
27-31	2
31-35	4-5
35-39	2
39-43	4-5
43-47	2
47-51	4-5
51-55	2
55-70	1-2

Effort	You can	It feels like you're...	Use it for...	% Max heart rate	% FT power
Easy Zone 1	Chat freely	Warming up	Warm-ups, cool-downs and recovery	60-65%	56-75%
Steady Zone 2	Speak one sentence at a time	Riding along in the bunch on the flat	Long rides	65-75%	76-90%
Brisk Zone 3	Speak a few words at a time	Breathing deeply and working hard	Long efforts of 10 to 20min	75-82%	91-105%
Hard Zone 4	Say only one word at a time	Really attacking (perhaps on a climb)	Efforts lasting 2-8min	82-89%	106-120%
Very hard Zone 5	Grun and gasp	Sprinting	Efforts lasting less than 2min	89%-MHR	121%+



Nelson's Tour de Test Valley

CW
Difficulty
rating:
6/10

**This
year's
event:
Sept 19**

**100
miles**

**1,703
metres
ascent**

Rebecca Charlton heads to Hampshire to preview a Test Valley pedal party

If putting your head down and driving the pedals for a PB is your thing, you could probably find an event better suited to you than this quirky sportive. If a festival atmosphere, campsite HQ and an epic after-party sound good, then Nelson's Tour de Test Valley will be right up your street.

That's not to say you can't challenge yourself; the 100-miler is a testing course, but you may have to give in to the laid-back atmosphere surrounding this sportive.

Where is it?

Nelson's Tour takes place in a quiet part of Hampshire in Grateley, near Andover. Starting at Pratt's Farm and staying on either remote country lanes or quiet stretches of road, you'll take in the idyllic sights and sounds of the Test Valley, meeting little traffic from start to finish.

Why ride it?

This event has an unrivalled atmosphere meaning you're met by plenty of smiling like-minded riders out for a fun day in the saddle. The fun starts the night before, if you're up for a spot of camping, and will carry on late into the evening the day of the ride. If you've partied too hard then there is a 50-mile option available.

History

This event is a celebration of the life of snowboarding talent Nelson Pratt, who passed away in 2012. The first event was held the following year and proved so successful it now makes an annual appearance on the sportive calendar. All profits go to the charity CALM.

How to enter

www.britishcycling.org.uk. Online bookings are on a first come, first served basis. The organisers website can be found at www.nelsonstour-detestvalley.co.uk

HQ details

Pratt's Farm is just off the A338, roughly halfway between the M3 and M4. Last year it was clearly signed on the local A-roads. The nearest railway station is Grateley.

Where to stay

You can camp at the event site. It's quiet, with toilets, showers and sizzling bacon sarnies and free tea from 7am. If a sleeping bag isn't for you, try the Hawk Inn at Amport, the Red House Hotel at Cholderton or Premier Inn at Andover.

Where to eat

The Hawk Inn, Amport does a great burger or there's the Black Swan in Monxton, which uses seasonal and local ingredients in its meals. Ten minutes away in Stockbridge there is a great pizza/Italian restaurant called Woodfire.

Local bike shop

Abbotts Ann Cycles is five miles, just off Salisbury Road, if you need any last minute spares.



A test of leg strength and partying power alike

Imagine people with radios blaring from their bikes and lots of friendly faces stopping at pubs along the route.

Held annually in memory of Nelson Pratt, star snowboarder and coach, who passed away in 2012, there's very much a vibe of keeping the event he loved going strong in his name, while raising money and awareness for charity Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM). You might even see a few familiar faces from the world of snow sports. Olympic medallist Jenny Jones and *Ski Sunday* presenter Ed Leigh have been spotted on previous editions.

The first 10 miles from the start lends itself to some pretty quick through and off, if you're in a group and want to stretch the legs. With narrow lanes that meander gently in a fairly flat gradient you can chew the first few miles up comfortably. But don't be lured into racing fellow riders unless you're sure you've got enough in the tank to go the distance — many of the challenges come later on.

The Test Valley throws up some unpredictable terrain and occasionally it felt as if we were taking on one of the Classics. There were times the surface of the road led us to loosen our grip on the bars and roll over some pretty rutted surfaces, especially as we hit the narrow roads on the west side of the North Wessex Downs.

It's worth keeping your eyes well up on the road ahead and preparing yourself to be met by thorns, potholes and gravel without warning. Make sure you pack your spare inner tubes as we suffered a few punctures during last year's event.

There are a couple of stiff gradients as you make your way deeper into the Downs, through the valley of the River Kennet. The first proper test comes after the village of Ham, a great warm-up for Combe Gibbet, just a few miles away. It's worth taking a moment at the top to soak up the views that stretch for miles over the county.

Watch yourself on the descents as most take you into a sharp turn at the bottom. There will be marshalling on the day so heed any warnings.

Most of the climbing is packed into the middle of the ride and the last true push against gravity comes near Ecchinswell. Watership Down is the last hill on the Full Monty, 100-mile route, and it's pretty tough. It rises steeply with an average gradient of eight per cent.

After this the rolling roads pull you back to Pratt's Farm where you began your journey. When you hear the music and laughter filling the air, accompanied by the heady smell of burgers sizzling on the barbecue, you know it will not be long before you're celebrating and raising a glass of local cider with fellow riders.

ORGANISER'S TARGET TIMES			
Route	Distance	Ave	Time
Chicken Curry	25 miles	11mph	2hr 17min
Chicken Curry	25 miles	15mph	1hr 40min
Chicken Curry	25 miles	18mph	1hr 23min
Spag Bol	50 miles	11mph	4hr 33min
Spag Bol	50 miles	15mph	3hr 20min
Spag Bol	50 miles	18mph	2hr 47min
The Full Monty	100 miles	11mph	9hr 6min
The Full Monty	100 miles	15mph	6hr 40min
The Full Monty	100 miles	18mph	5hr 33min

The challenges

1 Ham Hill

This starts with a friendly drag out of the village, but don't let it lull you into a false sense of security. Be prepared for the steep sting in the tail towards the top.

2 Faccombe

You've got some climbing in your legs at this point as it comes just after Combe Gibbet. It's a pretty punchy climb out of the village, averaging six per cent gradient.

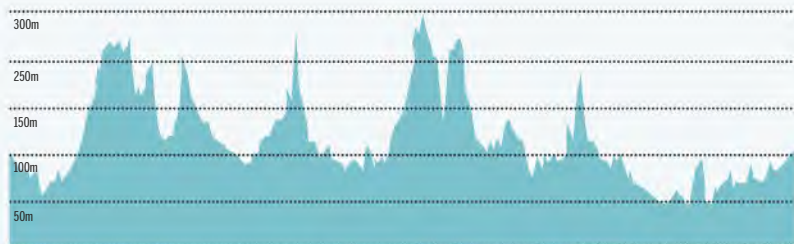
3 Watership Down, near Ecchinswell

The last hill on the Full Monty route and it's pretty tough, just when the legs are gone. It rises steeply with an average gradient of eight per cent.

NAIL IT

4 Combe Gibbet

This is a tough but incredible climb. It features in Simon Warren's *100 Greatest Cycling Climbs: A Road Cyclist's Guide to Britain's Hills*, sitting at number 25. You'll tackle this climb from the south side. There is a slight drag towards Combe but once on the climb proper it's fairly short, at just a half-mile long. It averages a gradient of 10 per cent. There shouldn't be too much here to hold you back — get out of the saddle and go for it. It's a good spot to leave the weaker climbers behind if only you can pull yourself away from gazing over the amazing views stretching for miles, across Hampshire and over the Kennett Valley, from the top.



Event website and gpx: <http://nelsonstourdetestvalley.co.uk/ride-info/>

Manilla Cycling Club

Chris Marshall-Bell rides with a wide-reaching, sociable club beneath the 'Yorkshire Matterhorn'

It says a lot about a club's appeal when three riders who travel almost 100 miles to train and represent their club are usurped by a team-mate's effort: driving 200 miles.

Pam Greer travels 125 miles from Grimsby, while Manchester duo Sarah Harrison and Anna Weaver drive 110 miles to train with Manilla Cycling, which is based in the North-East.

But it's Ellen McDermott who loses the most sleep by crossing a country border and driving 200 miles all the way from Glasgow to enjoy the cycling and comradeship.

Mark Evans, who travels a comparatively meagre distance of 20 miles from Hartlepool, can pinpoint

exactly why: "You hear stories of exclusive, snobby clubs and I know when the club formed they wanted to be divorced from that assumption. I must say, Tony's nailed it."

Credit to the creator

The Tony in question is Tony McDonagh, the club's pioneer who has woven together a club, in little over two years, where enjoyment takes precedence.

Training programmes are not dictated but rather tailored around a rider's own personal ambitions. "I'm a triathlete and wanted to improve my cycling but had no racing experience. Tony said I can learn with them, and it's great," says Harrison.

Based on the periphery of the North York Moors, the club is just a spin of the legs away from the notorious climbs of Rosedale Chimney and Blakey Bank.

Our ride on this June day, however, is centred on the picturesque, quaint little towns of Great Ayton, Stokesley and a brief incursion into the Moors. The drizzle is hardly inviting, but that doesn't deter the throng of riders from attending.

There's another reason not to miss out, too: "I missed the previous photo-shoot, as I broke my elbow, so I wasn't missing this one!" one rider claims.

An article on *Cycling Weekly's* website last autumn advertising the club's plea for female riders is credited with the number of women now on the club's roster. "Your article helped enormously," a grateful McDonagh says. "I was close to pulling the plug

"One member travels 200 miles for the comradeship"

Club facts

Based: Middlesbrough

Members: 45

Formed: 2013

Meets: Opposite the Buck Hotel, Great Ayton, at 9.30am every Sunday and 6.30pm every Monday. Inter-club competitions held once a month between April and September. New riders wanted.

on the idea but within days of the article I received 40 emails from women wanting to join."

They don't regret joining, either. Laughter fills the dialogue all ride, with members alternating places not because of pace difficulties but to exchange conversation with as many friends as possible.

"I only live 15 or so miles away but I travel here to ride with the lads, as opposed to training near home, because the craic is always flowing," one rider says.

Famous climbs

Another reason to leave the urban settlements is the rolling countryside below the towering presence of Roseberry Topping,

History

Formed in the autumn of 2013 with a view to providing more cycling opportunities for those who had little or no experience, the Manilla Cycling Club has quickly established itself in the North-East and has stayed true to its initial intentions.

"For us the sportives, cafe stops, club trips and cycling experience are as important as racing in bringing people together," founder Tony McDonagh says.

The club holds an internal race series, involving unofficial time trials, hill climbs and road races.

Its biggest promoted race was

the 2014 Hartlepool Carnival Road Race, which doubled up as the North-East Regional Circuit Championships.

Club patron Malcolm Elliott's take that Manilla is "a modern take on an old-fashioned cycling club" is an accurate representation.

What started as a group of eight riders meeting midweek has quickly escalated to the region's best racing team, with the men's team topping the British Cycling North-East regional rankings last year in its debut season.

"We decided to give racing a try and we found we were quite good at it," McDonagh added.

Achievements

■ 2014 North-East regional ranking champions.

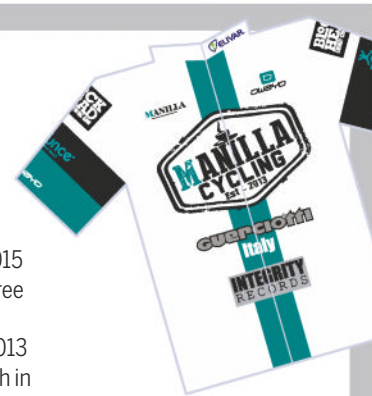
■ Adam McManus: two race wins in 2014.

■ Angela Hibbs: third in the 2015 National 50-mile time-trial; three road race wins in 2015.

■ Karen Poole: fourth in the 2013 World Masters time trial; fourth in the 2015 Tour of Cambridgeshire TT and second in the road race in the 35-39 category.

■ Four of the club's stars represent GB: Anna Weaver in the World Duathlon Championships, and Hazel Wright has raced in GB colours at the Euro Duathlon

Championships. Hannah Farran competed in the 2014 Triathlon World Championships, as did James Wilson, who also raced in the Triathlon European Championships.





Manilla Cycling club run

Ride highlights

1 Middleton-on-Leven to Hutton Rudby

A scenic, flat, quiet stretch of road between the two tiny hamlets, ideal to warm up the legs before hitting the North York Moors.

2 Kildale

The road through Kildale doesn't serve up leg-sapping torture but its undulations, flanked by fields and encroaching summits, force you to switch to a lower gear.

3 Crag Bank

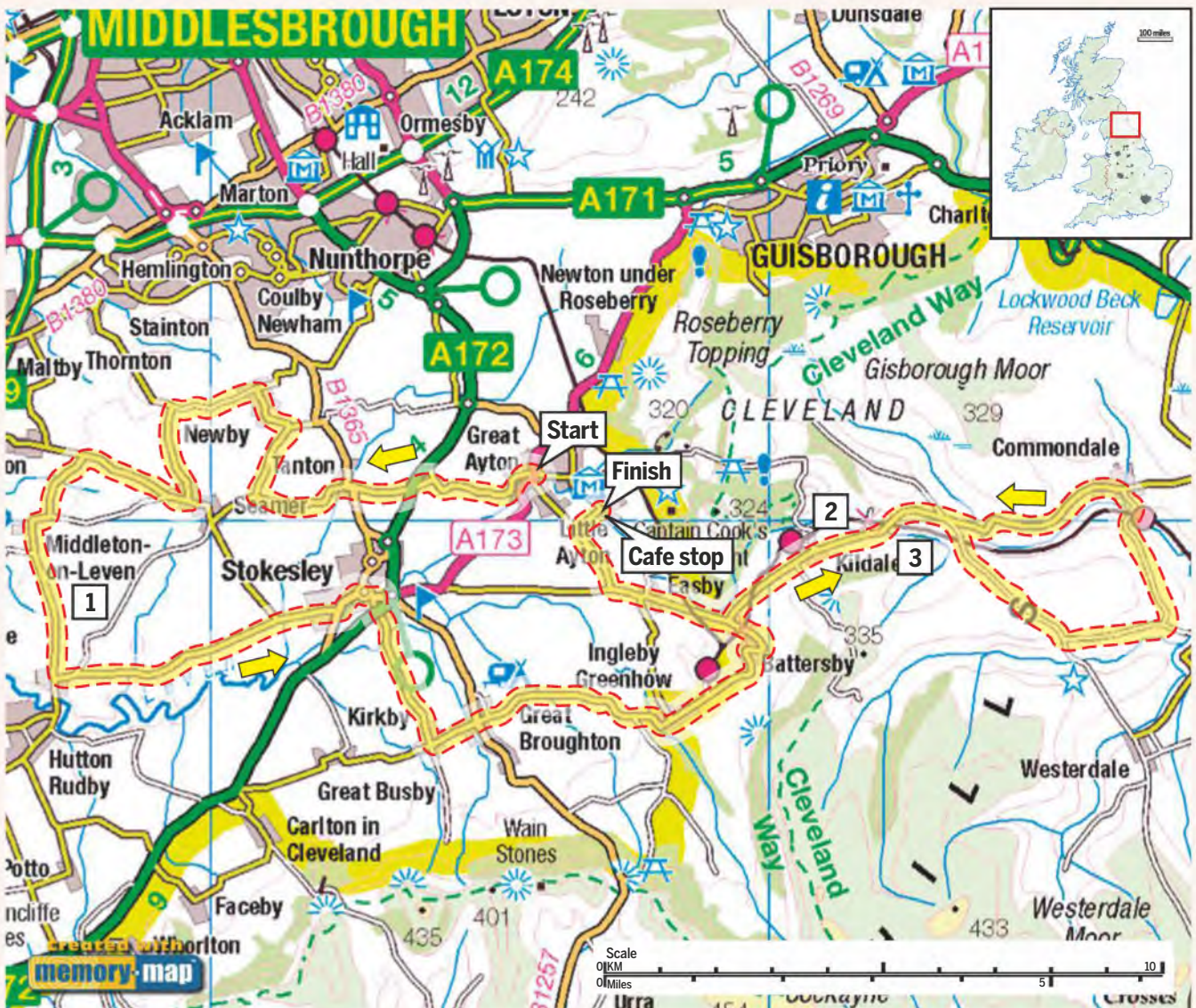
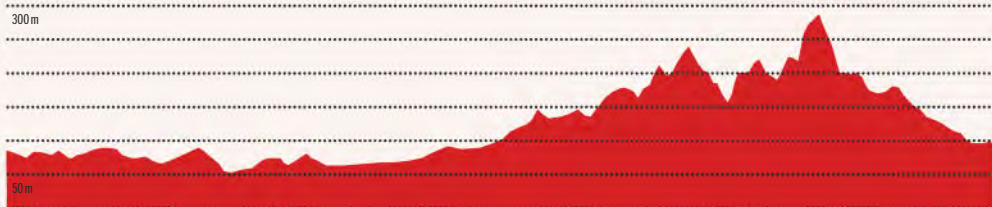
A descent and sharp left after Kildale brings you to the foot of this intense climb. It may be shorter than 500m from start to end, but the near 20 per cent incline at the beginning barely relents.

Favourite cafe

Fletchers Farm, Woodhouse Farm, Little Ayton, North Yorkshire, TS9 6HZ

Located among the Teesside and North Yorkshire countryside, making it the perfect hub for a mid- or post-ride stop, the cafe's charming wooden exterior impresses even more upon entry. With cycle-friendly owners, the cafe has plenty of space for riders to relax both inside and outside, and to enjoy the wide range of coffees, cakes and meals.

www.fletchers-farm.co.uk





An inclusive club, welcoming to all cyclists



Ride-outs attract big, sociable groups



Manilla offer something for all

Meet the club



Nikki Metcalfe, 42: "I went out for the first ride and I was hooked. Every race and ride, I'm there for the camaraderie."



James Wilson, 35: "It's the atmosphere more than anything else: there's no ego, 'I'm better than you' speak. It's so friendly."



Karen Poole, 38: "It's inclusive, everyone's welcoming and supportive of each other. It's a lovely atmosphere when we ride."



Ellis Hutchinson, 36: "We meet to discuss how the club can develop. Within two years we've become one of the best locally."

colloquially called the 'Yorkshire Matterhorn' locally for its similarities to the Swiss mountain.

When Roseberry drops out of sight, sprawling fields and the Cleveland Hills occupy the sight instead. You're never left disappointed. Cars rarely obscure the view or the riding; instead the biggest distraction as we

wind our way towards the idyllic Fletchers Farm Coffee Shop is the ever-real danger of becoming too immersed in the chat and forgetting to focus on the road.

Distracting chatter

And, lo and behold, that is exactly what happened as we exited Stokesley, half the group missing a right turn,

too busy talking. "I've begun the process of getting drier quicker!" says one, defending the reroute that sees them arrive at the cafe earlier.

Riding with Manilla feels like an on-the-bike university social, only without alcohol: good-humoured, and plenty of people to talk to. It's no wonder members travel from far and wide.

MASSIF

TOTAL DISTANCE 68 MILES
TOTAL ASCENT 2,600M

MINI MASSIF

TOTAL DISTANCE 46 MILES
TOTAL ASCENT 1,520M



SUNDAY 26 JULY
BAKEWELL, DERBYSHIRE



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Llywel Hill

Llywel, Powys

Simon Warren

The venue for the 1969 National Hill-Climb Championship where Granville Sydney completed his hat-trick, Llywel Hill is one of the less well-travelled roads in Wales and something of a curiosity. Leaving the A40 on the northern edge of the Brecon Beacons and heading up into a military training ground at the top, this road is possibly the smallest and steepest dual carriageway anywhere in Britain. It's positively bizarre to see two parallel narrow roads climbing the same ridge separated by just a metre of grass and trees.

CW
Difficulty
rating:
7/10

One can only assume that due to the type of army vehicles using the road they laid it this way to allow traffic to flow. The benefit to cyclists is that you won't meet any oncoming traffic as you climb, allowing plenty of room to suffer. Hardest on the lower slopes where the gradient reaches 20 per cent in places before easing back later on, it's always a struggle but thankfully levels slightly before hitting 16 per cent for the final push to the top. Approaching the summit the two roads merge then you roll over a cattle grid, beneath a large red flag and can ride on into the eerily sparse training ground.

The stats

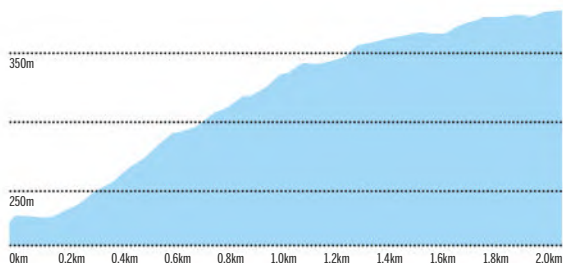
WHERE Leave the A40 and head north into Llywel. Follow the road round the church then begin to climb where the carriageway splits.



KOM Top Tip

Take a slight breather before you hit the final push to the top.

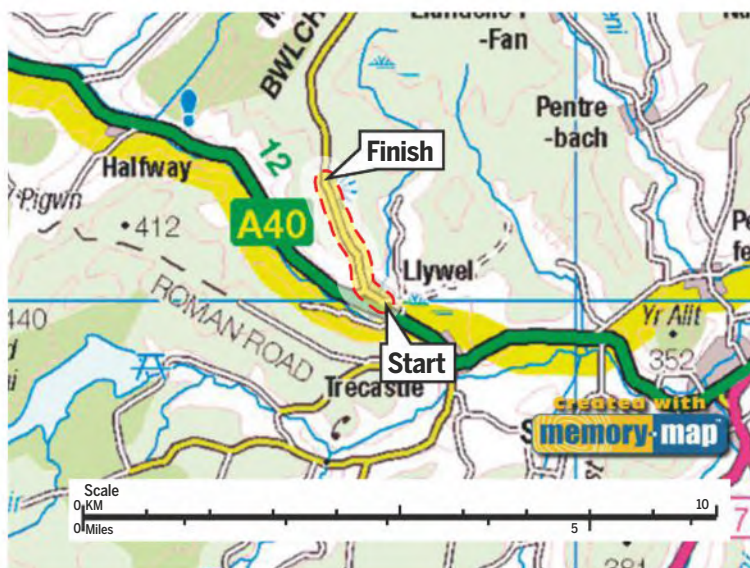
1.9km **378m** **145m** **7%** **20%**
Length Summit height Height gain Average Max gradient
gradient



Strava file: www.strava.com/segments/1166316



Llywel was famous for a day when the championships visited



Smail's pace

There was a continental flavour to the TMG Horizon Trophy Road Race in Bedfordshire on Sunday, with several riders — including winner Robert Smail (Tomacc CC) — coming over from Belgium to take part.

Smail, and former Reading CC rider Joe Harris, were joined by UCI-registered Belgium-based Stephen Orbie (VI Technics) in the 101-mile race based at Cotteslow School.

Smail took victory ahead of veteran Roy Chamberlain (Corley Cycles-Drops) with Harris third.

In Shropshire, Andrew Williams (Cwmcarn Paragon CC) won the Severn Valley Andy Pool Memorial Road Race at Bridgnorth, winning a 10-rider sprint finish to the 84-mile race from Tom Swinger (Ystwyth CC), while another Cwmcarn rider, Richard Harris, took third.

Round seven of the 60-mile National Junior Series, the Hatherleigh Junior Road Race was won by Nathan Draper (RST Racing Team).

In time trialling, Alan Thomson (Sandy Wallace Cycles) was crowned the Scottish national 50-mile champion after stopping the clock at 1:50.28 in the

Performance of the week

Nathan Draper (RST Racing Team)

Hatherleigh Junior RR

The Isle of Man rider won the latest round of the National Junior Road Series, despite riding with no team-mates at round seven in Devon.

title race at Fourdoun in Kincardineshire on Sunday.

He was two minutes clear of runner-up Callum Finlayson (Moray Firth CC), while fastest female was Catriona Gunn (Team Thomsons Cycles) with 2:08.48.

In Wales, Kieron Davies (drag2zero.com) dominated both the Ross on Wye CC 10 and 25 last weekend, while in Berkshire there was a one-two for Newbury Road Club with Tim Cartwright and Ian Greenstreet being the two fastest in the West London CA 50 at Aldermaston.

And North Lancs Road Club's Steve Irwin clocked 3:41.58 to win the Shropshire 100-Mile Championship, while Theresa Naylor (Preston CC) was fastest woman in 4:41.43.

In Hampshire, Matt Burden (Severn RC) set a new course record of 52.57 in the Sotonia CC 25 on the P128 at Winsor. The runner-up was Greg Parker (VC St Raphael).

In Kent, Andrew Meilak (VeloRefined Aerosmith) was fastest in the Gravesend CC 25 at Challock, clocking 54.03 to win by 13 seconds from Nick Malins (4T+ Velo), while Emma Juden (Ashfor4d Wheelers) was best female with 1:09.39.

Road racing

Sunday, July 12

Stockton Grand Prix (Elite Road Series round 5, Stockton, County Durham):

1. Chris Opie (One Pro Cycling) 3:57.18; 2. J. McEvoy (NFTO); 3. S. Lowe (Raleigh-GAC); 4. E. Oliphant (Raleigh-GAC); 5. G. Briggs (JLT-Condor); 6. D. McGowan (Pedal Heaven RT); 7. J. Lowsley-Williams (NFTO); 8. S. Lampier (Raleigh-GAC); 9. W. Bjergfelt (SportGrub KUOTA Cycling Team); 10. I. Wilkinson (Raleigh-GAC) all same time.

Hatherleigh Junior Road Race (National Junior Road Series, Devon):

1. Nathan Draper (RST Racing Team) 60 miles in 2:25.10; 2. L. Modell (Catford CC Banks) +0.03; 3. R. Scott (VCUK PH-MAS) +0.05; 4. J. Mattock (Giant CC-Halo Films); 5. C. Biddle (Solihull CC) all same time; 6. O. Peckover (Sherwood Pines SRAM) +0.07; 7. C. McFadzean (Cycle Sport Dynamo) +0.09; 8. H. Jones (Pedal Heaven); 9. J. Billyard (RP Racing Team); 10. R. Hodgson (VCUK PH-MAS) all same time.

TMG Horizon Trophy (Cotteslow, Bedfordshire):

1. Robert Smail (Tomacc CC) 101 miles in 3:58.00; 2. R. Chamberlain (Corley Cycle/Drops RT); 3. J. Harris (Tomacc CC); 4. S. Orbie (VI Technics); 5. J. Hennessy (Spirit Bikes RT) all same time; 6. M. Smith (Corley Cycle/Drops RT) +0.35; 7. G. Tunnock (Finsbury Park CC); 8. J. Hales (Spirit Bikes RT); 9. T. Allen (Corley Cycle/Drops RT); 10. J. Natale (Dulwich Paragon CC) all same time.

Surrey League (Bletchingley, Surrey):

2, 3: 1. George Stainton-Ellis (ASL Projects RT) 70 miles in 2:49.00; 2. R. Wilson (London Dynamo); 3. A. Syme (Primera Sports); 4. W. Jesse (unattached); 5. J. Stannard (Dulwich Paragon CC); 6. R. Keepence (Dulwich Paragon CC); 7. A. Ellison (Bottechia UK); 8. A. Moore (ASL Projects RT); 9. M. Bone (Danny Shane-Storck Racing); 10. A. Tinsley (Twickenham CC) all same time.

Arthur Campbell Memorial (Newton Mearns, Renfrewshire):

3, 4: 1. Kyle Johnston (East Kilbride RCO 50 miles in 2:10.52; 2. S. Gordon (Pro Vision Cycle Clothing); 3. F. Knox (Glasgow CT); 4. C. Hinds (Glasgow Green CC); 5. C. Sharp (Kinross CC); 6. G. O'Malley (Glasgow Couriers); 7. S. Woodliff (Ayr Roads CC); 8. C. Gray (Peebles CC); 9. A. Vetraino (Glasgow CT); 10. S. Newman (Glasgow Couriers) all same time.

Saturday, July 11

Severn Valley Road Race (Bridgnorth, Shropshire):

1. Andrew Williams (Cwmcarn Paragon CC) 84 miles in 3:21.00; 2. T. Swinger (Ystwyth CC); 3. R. Harris (Cwmcarn Paragon CC); 4. R. Bussell (Aero-Coach/RST Sport Club); 5. C. Parry (Ride 24/7); 6. E. Roberts (Team Elite); 7. K. Zentek (Team Chronomaster); 8. R. Bevia (The Bulls); 9. T. Brazier (Chester RC); 10. A. Turner (NFTO) all same time.

Friday, July 10

Stockton Town Centre Criterium (Elite Circuit Series round 3):

E, 1, 2: 1. Chris Lawless (Team Wiggins) 1:10.10; 2. D. McGowan (Pedal Heaven RT); 3. G. Briggs (JLT-Condor); 4. W. Fox (Pedal Heaven



RT); 5. E. Oliphant (Raleigh-GAC); 6. J. Mould (One Pro Cycling); 7. G. Atkins (One Pro Cycling); 8. A. Paton (Pedal Heaven RT); 9. J. Tipper (Neon Velo); 10. I. Bibby (NFTO) all same time. **Under-23:** Chris Lawless.

Thursday, July 9

RAF Road Race Championships (RAF Cranwell, Lincolnshire):

Men 2, 3: 1. Dan Watts (RAF CC); 2. R. Willcocks (RAF CC); 3. J. Gates (RAF CC); 4. R. Mallen (RAF CC); 5. A. Richardson (RAF CC); 6. M. Pearson (RAF CC); 7. S. Avis (RAF CC); 8. J. Mason (RAF CC); 9. M. Titchener (RAF CC); 10. J. Guest (RAF CC)

Women 2, 3, 4: 1. Lucy Nell (unattached); 2. F. Jordan (Steve Peat Syndicate Global); 3. C. Redden (45 Road Club); 4. V. Webb (Litchfield City CC); 5. L. Pearson (RAF CC); 6. V. Williams (Team WNT); 7. S. Pugh (RAF CC); 8. S. Russell (Wellingborough Cycles); 9. F. Freeman (unattached); 10. N. Diment (unattached).

Men 4: 1. Matthew Callaghan (Odiham Cycling Club); 2. M. Taylor (unattached); 3. B. Hayman (unattached); 4. G. Richardson (RAF CC); 5. J. Clarke (Lincoln Wheelers CC); 6. M. Priestly (RAF CC); 7. A. Wells (RAF CC); 8. J. Vogel (RAF CC); 9. C. Stanson (RAF CC); 10. M. Daley (unattached).

Time trials

Sunday, July 12

SCCA & WCTCA Shropshire Championship 100 (Preston, Shropshire):

1. Steve Irwin (North Lancs RC) 3:41.58
2. V. Chetta (Mid Shropshire Wheelers) 3:56.57
3. P. Williams (Liverpool Phoenix CC-Aintree) 3:58.31
4. I. Holbrook (Stone Wheelers CC) 3:59.12
5. M. Stell (Ribble Valley CRC) 4:00.19
6. K. Vickers (Mid Shropshire Wheelers) 4:06.18
7. G. Kemp (Deeside Olympic RRC) 4:08.29
8. A. Winstanley (Liverpool Phoenix CC) 4:08.56
9. C. Edmondson (Fibrex-Wrexham RC) 4:08.58
10. P. Warburton (Liverpool Phoenix CC) 4:10.02
Veteran: Steve Irwin
Category B: Kirk Vicars
Woman: Theresa Taylor (Preston CC) 4:41.43

West London CA 50 (Aldermaston, Berkshire):

1. Tim Cartwright (Newbury RC) 1:46.16
2. I. Greenstreet (Newbury RC) 1:50.54
3. P. Watts (North Hampshire RC) 1:53.39
4. M. Charlton (Farnborough and Camberley CC) 1:54.44
5. A. Martin (Kingston Wheelers CC) 1:56.15
6. P. Tedbury (Mercedes AMG Petronas CC) 1:57.13
7. S. Auckland (Maidenhead and District CC) 1:57.47
8. P. Holdsworth (Hounslow and District Wh) 1:57.49
9. G. Nienaber (Farnham CC) 1:58.06
10. A. Payne (Maidenhead and District CC) 1:59.31

Scottish 50-Mile Championship (Fourdoun, Kincardineshire):

Rider of the week

Kieron Davies (drag2zero.com)

Ross on Wye CC 10 and 25
The 28-year-old from Dyfed took victory in both the Ross on Wye CC time trials last weekend, leaving the opposition in his wake with big winning margins.

Snowdon Sports supply domestic results and reports to Cycling Weekly. Please send your information to results@snowdons.co.uk or call 0114 232 5555 and we will do our best to include them in our expanded racing section.

The year's fastest

10 MILES

	Rider	Time	Course	Date
1	Bradley Wiggins (Team Wiggins)	17.58	V718	16/05/15
2	M. Jones (drag2zero.com)	18.24	V718	30/05/15
3	A. Bromley (Barnsley RC)	18.26	V718	30/05/15
4	M. Sinclair (Lutterworth Cycle Centre)	18.28	V718	03/06/15
5	J. Surtees (Team Swift)	18.38	H10/17	30/05/15
6	A. Wareham (Team Swift)	18.39	V718	17/06/15
=7	M. Jones (drag2zero.com)	18.40	H10/8	17/06/15
=7	S. Irwin (North Lincs RC)	18.40	V718	11/04/15
=7	J. Weirs (Team Jewson)	18.40	V718	30/05/15
10	R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	18.41	V718	03/06/15

25 MILES

	Rider	Time	Course	Date
1	Matt Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	46.30	A25/11	20/06/15
2	M. Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	46.38	A25/11	04/07/15
3	S. Irwin (North Lincs RC)	47.08	A25/11	20/06/15
4	A. Jackson (Team Swift)	47.16	A25/11	20/06/15
5	K. Davies (Team NBCC)	47.19	R25/3h	26/04/15
6	M. Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	47.28	A25/11	11/04/15
=7	M. Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	47.31	A25/11	09/05/15
=7	K. Davies (Team NBCC)	47.31	R25/7	10/05/15
9	R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	47.48	A25/11	20/06/15
10	R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	47.57	A25/11	04/07/15

50 MILES

	Rider	Time	Course	Date
1	Matt Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	1:35.54	A50/6	27/06/15
2	R. Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	1:38.39	A50/6	27/06/15
3	S. Irwin (North Lincs RC)	1:38.49	A50/6	27/06/15
4	C. Taylor (South Pennine RC)	1:39.40	E2/50c	27/06/15
5	D. Green (Team Velovelocity.co.uk)	1:40.32	E2/50c	13/06/15
6	P. Lawrence (Team Swift)	1:40.33	E2/50c	13/06/15
7	M. Bottrill (drag2zero.com)	1:41.22	J4/16	13/06/15
8	D. Lazenby (Baines Racing)	1:42.00	E2/50c	13/06/15
9	A. Topham (High Wycombe CC)	1:42.18	H50/8	10/05/15
10	P. Gamlin (Northover VT)	1:42.35	A50/6	27/06/15

100 MILES

	Rider	Time	Course	Date
1	Richard Bideau (Pendle Forest CC)	3:18.54	T1002	05/07/15
2	S. Irwin (North Lincs RC)	3:25.19	T1002	05/07/15
3	C. Taylor (South Pennine RC)	3:32.50	R100/8a	05/07/15
4	A. Topham (High Wycombe CC)	3:33.05	R100/8a	05/07/15
5	A. Topham (High Wycombe CC)	3:34.01	H100/88	24/05/15
6	I. Cox (North Lincs RC)	3:34.39	T1002	05/07/15
7	E. Addis (Peebles CC)	3:37.44	T1002	05/07/15
8	P. Gamlin (Northover VT)	3:38.41	R100/8a	05/07/15
=9	A. Jackson (Team Swift)	3:38.53	R100/8a	05/07/15
=9	S. Wilson (Team Polypipe)	3:38.53	R100/8a	05/07/15

1. Alan Thomson

(Sandy Wallace Cycles)1:50.28

2. C. Finlayson (Moray Firth CC)1:52.31

3. T. Broadbent (Elgin CC)1:54.16

4. M. Skilling (Icarus Racing)1:54.17

5. J. Cusick (Dooleys Cycles)1:54.26

6. E. Addis (Peebles CC)1:54.46

7. P. Kelmam (Deeside Thistle CC)1:55.00

8. A. Holmes (Paisley Velo)1:55.09

9. K. Armstrong (Ayr Roads CC)1:55.19

10. K. Robertson (Granite City CC)1:55.39

Women:

1. Catriona Gunn

(Team Thomsons Cycles)2:08.48

2. L. Curran (Dooleys Cycles)2:09.18

3. T. McIntosh (Ayr Roads CC)2:09.57

Ross-on-Wye and District CC 25 (Usk, Monmouthshire):

1. Kieron Davies (Drag2zero.com)48.36

2. B. Anstie (73 Degrees Bicycles)51.15

3. P. Jones (Severn Valley Cycles)52.26

4. L. Cornish (Cwmcam Paragon RC)53.32

5. W. Bevan (Ross-on-Wye & District Wh CC)54.34

6. C. Zanettacci (Cheltenham & County CC)54.44

=7. G. Davis (Dursley RC)55.04

=7. S. Coles (Northover VTI)55.04

9. D. Meacham (Wyrre Forest CRC)55.19

10. L. Jones (Severn Valley Cycles)55.28

Vet on standard: Chris Scawn (Plymouth Corinthian CC)+14.22

Women: Becky Smith (Revo Racing)1:01.38

Team: Severn Valley Cycles (Paul Jones, Lee Jones and Matt Heaman)2:47.33

Gravesend CC 25 (Challock, Kent):

1. Andrew Meilak

(VeloRefined Aerosmiths)54.03

2. N. Malins (41 + Velo Club)54.16

3. N. Wilson (Rye & District Wh CC)55.29

4. B. Hawkes (Thanet RC)56.21

5. S. Henderson (Thanet RC)56.26

6. N. Harris (PMR at Toachim House)56.31

7. N. Couchman (Southborough & District Wh)56.36

8. H. Garip (Thanet RC)57.31

9. T. Kingston (Deal Tri)57.34

10. M. Hill (VeloRefined Aerosmiths)57.36

Veteran: Andrew Meilak

Junior: William Brassington

(Dulwich Paragon)1:16.30

Woman: Rebecca Wilson

(Rye and District Wheelers)59.45

Team: VeloRefined Aerosmiths

(Andrew Meilak, Mark Hill, Paul Smith)2:49.53

Sunderland Clarion CC 25 (Ponteland, Northumberland):

1. Danny Grieves (GS Metro)54.06

2. M. Flannery (Richmond Tri Kudu)55.08

3. J. Warrington (Tyneside Vagabonds CC)55.47

4. D. Penfold (Cestria CC)56.20

5. C. Isats (Berwick Wheelers)56.22

6. B. Lane (GS Metro)56.51

7. E. Gowland (Team Swift)57.06

8. B. Metcalfe (Team Swift)57.31

9. I. Taylor (Ciclo Costa Blanca)57.31

10. R. Richardson (Teesdale CRC)58.11

Women: Angela Hibbs (Team Wattcycle)58.39

Veterans on std: Mark Flannery.

Unity CC 25 (Chelmsford, Essex):

1. Steve Dennis (East Grinstead CC) ..55.42

2. R. Price (London Phoenix)55.51

3. C. Ferri (Cadence Performance)56.33

4. S. Henning (Catford CC)57.12

5. S. Daw (Veloschils Interbike)57.52

6. C. Pearce (Team Velo Velocity)58.12

7. P. Hart (Southend Wheelers)58.53

=8. D. Gilbert (Chelmer CC)59.23

=8. A. Manley (Colchester Rovers CC)59.23

10. A. Turnock (Finsbury Park CC)59.38

Women: Lisa Haines (Maldon and Dist CC)1:07.10

Saturday, July 11

VTIA (East Anglia) 25 (Newmarket, Suffolk):

1. Peter Lawrence (Team Swift)50.02

2. R. West (RST Sport Aero-Coach)51.01

3. J. Kierman (St Ives CC)51.24

4. M. Hodson (St Ives CC)51.40

5. D. Lazenby

(Baines Racing Silverstone Cycle)51.50

6. C. Whitwell (St Ives CC)52.16

7. R. Young (Team Vision Racing)52.29

8. R. Hancock (St Neots CC)52.49

9. I. Moffatt (Virgin Active)53.29

10. J. Surtees (Team Swift)53.29

Woman: Rachel Elliot (Newbury RC)55.26

Veteran: Len Benton

(Colchester Rovers CC)1:01.35

Tandem: Glenn Taylor (Shorter Rochford)

and Mark Arnold (CC Desiregear)46.44

Sotonia CC 25 (Winsor, Hampshire):

1. Matt Burden (Severn CC)52.57

2. G. Parker (Velo Club St Raphael)54.46

3. S. Healey (Andover Wheelers CC)55.19

4. S. Gergona (Velo Club St Raphael)55.36

5. D. Pickering (Bournemouth Jubilee Wh)56.01

6. R. Hughes (Clarence Wheelers CC)56.10

7. D. Dent (Wightlink/Offshore RT)56.23

8. A. Langdown (Hampshire RC)56.52

9. T. Icke (Velo Club St Raphael)57.18

10. D. Edwards (Sotonia CC)57.18

Women: Claire Newman (Crabwood CC)1:08.34

Nova CC 25 (Goostrey, Cheshire):

1. Scott Burns (Manchester Wh)54.24

2. S. Denith (coveryourcar.co.uk RT)55.19

3. W. Gell (coveryourcar.co.uk RT)55.22

4. N. Skellern (Team Swift)55.24

5. M. Nulty (Glossop Kinder Velo)55.31

6. R. Pollen (Ashley Touring CC)55.55

7. T. Thornely (Buxton CC)56.23

8. R. Brennan (Preston CC)56.28

9. C. Siepen (Seamons CC)56.36

10. D. Crisp (Vision Racing)56.36

Manchester and District LCA 25 (Goostrey, Cheshire):

1. Claire Munton

(Maltini Race Team)1:02.07

2. Z. Whiteside (Lancashire RC)1:06.55

3. C. Logan (Macclesfield Wh)1:07.07

4. H. Bamforth (The Racing Chance Fdn)1:07.13

5. J. Scotchford (North Lincs RC)1:07.43

6. E. Mathison (Leigh Premier)1:09.37

7. J. Harcourt (Stretford Wheelers)1:10.10

8. H. Catter (Manchester Wheelers)1:12.15

9. J. Ward (Wills Wheels CC)1:12.34

10. C. McCloskey-Lambert (Manchester Wh)1:12.51

Sherwood CC 10 (Long Benington, Lincs):

1. Lee Tunncliffe (Clay Cross RT)19.34

2. J. Perkins (Zenith CC)19.46

3. D. Barnett (drag2zero.com)19.48

4. A. Green (Lutterworth Cycle Centre)20.00

5. C. Demoulin (Rapha CC)20.20

6. R. Jelly (Mapperley CC)20.27

7. S. Gibson (Peak RC)20.28

8. J. Seabridge (Mercia CC)20.29

9. G. Platts (MG Décor)20.32

10. J. Haines (Melton Olympic)20.33

Team: Team Zenith

(Perkins, Shaun Vincent, Gareth Pymm)1:01.31

Women: Karen Ledger (Langsett Cycles)22.13

Crawley Wheelers 10 (Crawley, Sussex):

1. Peter Tadros

(In-Gear Quickvit Trainsharp RT)20.19

2. L. Wintergold (Hounslow and District Whs)20.25

3. J. Rix (Crawley Wheelers)20.29

4. P. Allen (South Downs Bikes)20.48

5. M. Perry (All Terrain Cycles)20.56

6. N. Malins (4T Velo Club)21.06

7. C. Booth (Cadence Performance)21.11

8. S. Ralston (London Dynamo)21.30

9. C. Yates (East Grinstead CC)21.23

10. I. Brodgen (Eastbourne Rovers)21.26

Lincoln Wheelers Charity 10 (Ingham, Lincolnshire):

1. Alex Colman (Arrow Cycles)20.54

2. R. Krygsman (Team Swift)21.02

3. N. Palmer (Spalding CC)21.13

4. I. Guilor (Mapperley CC)21.13

5. C. Ward (Spalding CC)21.22

6. J. Hargrave (Fenland Road Club)21.31

7. A. Broxholme (Arrow Cycles)21.46

8. I. Dalton (Cherry Valley RT)21.56

9. R. Hamblin (Sleaford Wheelers)21.57

10. S. Wells (Flex-Tech Ettridge Cycles RT)21.58

Audrey Gault Memorial 10 (Moray, Scotland):

1. Callum Finlayson (Moray Firth CC)21.58

2. E. Innes (Moray Firth CC)22.18

3. J. Kennedy (Paisley Velo RT)22.28

4. D. Smith (Moray Firth CC)22.57

5. C. Goddard (Moray Firth CC)23.18

6. M. Chisholm (Elgin CC)23.27

7. K. Lackie (Moray Firth CC)23.32

8. D. Harter (Forres CC)23.50

9. D. Stuart (Cromarty Firth CC)23.51

10. B. Fishpool (Cairngorm CC)23.52

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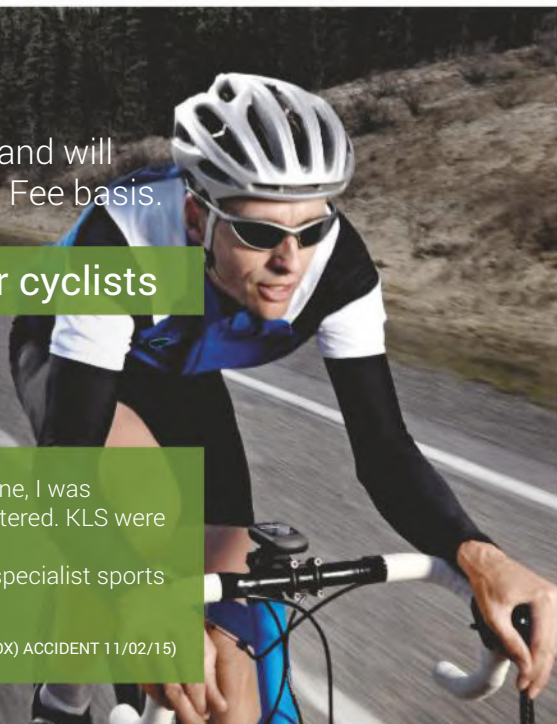
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Dr Hutch

Tour cyclists might be tough, but that doesn't make the rest of us any less weedy, says the Doc

doctorhutch_cycling@timeinc.com



Do you like cycling? Do you use social media? Are you a spineless people-pleaser with an unquenchable thirst for fleeting popularity and the worthless approval of anonymous strangers? OK, the second and third questions are basically the same, but still, if the answers are yes, yes and yes, then read on.

So here's what you do. You find a picture of a bloodied post-crash cyclist limping along behind the bunch. There must be road rash, shredded kit, a harrowed expression and all the sauces and trimmings. You post it alongside a photo of a footballer rolling around in fake agony after being upended by nothing very much. You offer a witty comment, contrasting the bravery of the cyclist, who's pretending he's just fine, and the footballer, who's pretending he's broken every bone in his body. For a few fleeting moments, you are the hero of the internet.

Acts of Cycling Stupidity

I was at a vintage bicycle rally last week. That's to say, a rally of vintage bicycles, rather than a rally of vintage bicyclists. Though in truth there were points when you'd have been a bit hard pressed to make that distinction just by looking.

There was an associated jumble sale of ancient bicycles, components, kit, books, and hard-to-find spare parts. At one table, a vendor and a browser were picking their way through a small box of odd bits and pieces — pedal rubbers, odd brake levers, empirically sized nuts and bolts. One of them picked up a strange, chromed lever of some sort. They both stared at it for several moments.

"I think it's the door handle from a Ford Fiesta," the vendor eventually said.

What this manages to do is claim for all cyclists a slice of one man's courage. We are all that guy. OK, we didn't get the opportunity to demonstrate it personally, not having been fortunate enough to have our bodies shattered in a 15-rider pile-up in the first week of the Tour, but hey, that's still us.

It also manages to take a swing at footballers, and in the world of cycling, that is never a bad thing.

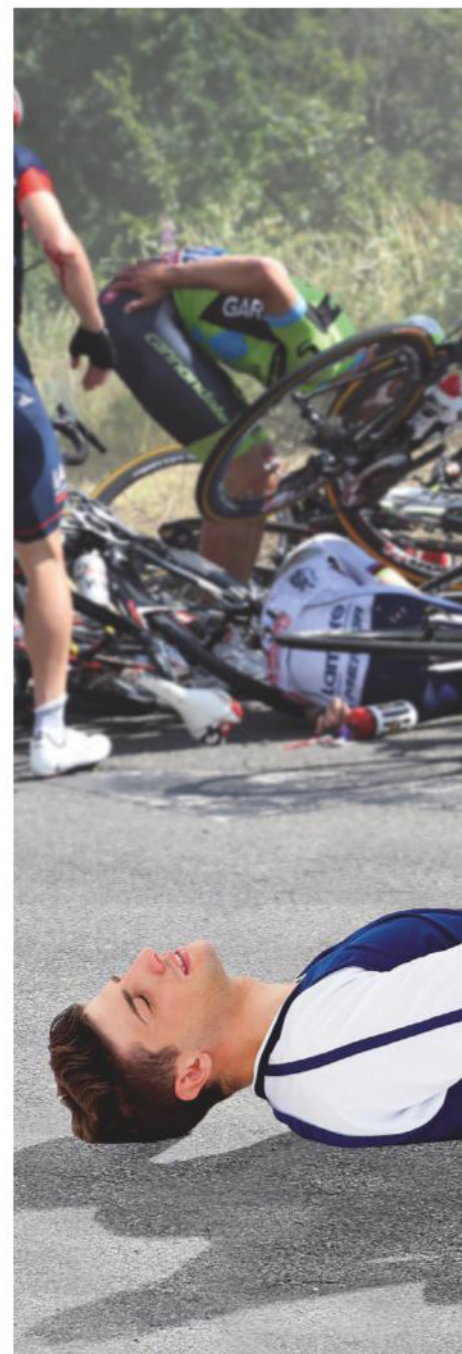
There are, however, some matters arising. We shall start with the obvious one. We're not actually all the same. Tweeting a photo of Geraint Thomas crossing the line in Paris a couple of years ago having ridden almost the whole Tour de France with a broken pelvis no more makes me brave than it makes me Welsh.

Part-time comradeship

(Incidentally — and for God's sake don't point this out to the *Daily Mail* — it's curious that when a bike rider runs a red light, he's "not one of us, we're not all the same you know, that's just some bloke on a bike," yet when someone finishes a bike race with a broken collarbone, we fall over ourselves to get tarred with the same brush.)

Worse, from the point of view of our own smugness, it has less to do with bravery than it has to do with the rules. In a bike race, crashes are almost always taken as racing incidents. They're no one's fault, they just happen, and everyone accepts that it's part of the game.

In football, pretty much every time someone hits the deck there's a public inquiry, blame is



administered, and punishment dealt out. To put that another way, if every time there was a crash in a bike race, there was a chance that someone would get sent off, then most of the Tour peloton would be queuing up to bounce off Chris Froome, roll about on the verge a bit, and cry foul.

Similarly, if football were true to its original format, and was a massive point-to-point brawl that travelled from one town to



“Cyclists as a collective are no braver than anyone. I’m proof”

another (does that concept sound familiar?), then anyone who got knocked over and spent too long fishing for an Oscar would get up to find that the entire event was

already in the next county. Under those circumstances, believe me, they’d get up sharpish and run after it too.

The truth of it is, as a collective, we’re no braver than anyone. For every Geraint Thomas or Michael Matthews, there is someone like me. I speak with authority here; I once hid behind a hedge after a crash so that the team manager wouldn’t spot me and make me get back on my bike.

GREAT INVENTIONS OF CYCLING

The club run 1870

The first club run was what the first cycling club did as soon as it had agreed a constitution, a membership policy, a subscription, elected many officers to its committee, and designed a club uniform. It was, after all, the Victorian era, and there was a proper order to things.

Frankly, nothing worth a damn has changed since. A group of riders from a club meet at an agreed point, at an agreed place, about 15 minutes later than the agreed time. That is, as a rule, where the agreement ends.

There will be a designated leader, who will likely as not fail to show up, and a designated route that no one will know, to a cafe which, in the unlikely event anyone ever finds it, will probably be closed.

The advantages of the club run are numerous. A primer on the local lanes, some of which have been in use by clubs since the very beginning. Companionship. And advice. Oh, yes. Advice.

‘Take it from me’

The members of a club run will be happy to advise on any or all of the following: riding position, clothing, bicycle, wheels, tyres, tyre pressures, chain lubrication, mudguard fitment (“I don’t care if it’s July, lad”), nutrition, nose-blowing, leg-shaving, cadence, average speed, mental outlook, marital relationships, and even, occasionally, cycling. Please note that this list is not exhaustive. Not by a long way.

A club run will also give the new rider the chance to learn by example, mainly in the form of aversion therapy. There is, for instance, no inspiration to weight loss to equal the terrifying sight of a club run chomping its way through the entire cake display at a local cafe.





Cinelli 1A stem

Cino Cinelli turned an ugly-duckling component into a beautiful swan, says Simon Smythe

No stem before or after the Cinelli 1A has successfully combined swooping elegance with matchless strength and durability. Not only that — it has been race proven by the greatest champion of all.

It's a small and workaday part of the bicycle, but the stem is always a focal point. Therefore a perfectionist such as Eddy Merckx, who used the Cinelli 1A to devastating effect throughout his career, demanded not only that every part was fit for purpose but that it looked 'right'.

Before the 1960s, stems were made from brazed steel or sometimes cast aluminium. Their expander bolts generally stuck up above the level of the extension. They had a primitive, though occasionally ornamental,

dawn-of-cycling look. They were heavy, and in the case of the steel stems, quickly became pitted or acquired a patina of corrosion, thanks to the fact they were the closest part of the bicycle to the forehead dripping with sweat.

But forged aluminium stems changed all that. Cino Cinelli, who had made his name making steel handlebars, stems and frames with his brother Giotto in Florence in the late 1940s and then on his own from Milan once the brothers split, was not an early adopter of aluminium components — his primary concern was always strength. However, his first forged aluminium stem, the 1A, launched in 1963, revolutionised stem design. Its one-piece construction looked super-clean, its appearance enhanced by swapping the traditional protruding expander bolt head for a recessed Allen bolt.

Design exclusivity

The standard clamp diameter for road competition at that time was 26mm — a Continental rounding-up of the 25.4mm that was equivalent to the imperial inch.

For increased rigidity, Cinelli had upped it to 26.4, giving the bar more surface area for the stem to clamp to. This also of course meant Cinelli's bars and stems were mutually exclusive and not to be mixed and matched with products from Italian rivals such as 3T, which stuck with the 26.0 standard.

Cinelli also used a serrated internal clamping surface, enabling its 'teeth' to grip the bar — a much cleaner way than the smooth-faced friction system that would not hold the bar so immovably and that could also leave scuff marks on it.

The 1A became an instant classic and was produced into the 1990s until the uglier but arguably superior A-head system was imported from mountain biking.

For retro fans, Cinelli recently reissued the 1A with a 26.0mm clamp, falling in line with the commonest standard, but the modern version still has the classic 'milky' anodised finish, the same instantly recognisable, much copied gooseneck shape — and of course that inimitable Grand Tour-winning heritage.

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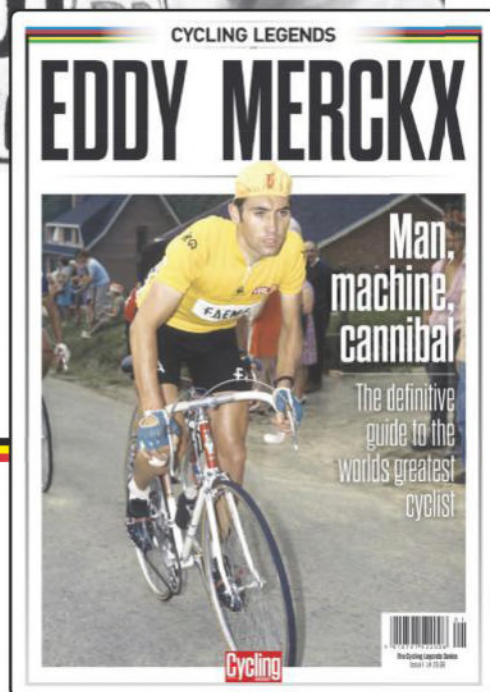
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